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The knight in the forest.

Modern Classics.

UNDINE.

SINTRAM AND HIS COMPANIONS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

J. B. H. DE ST. PIERRE.

ILLUSTRATED.

1884
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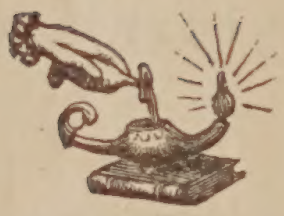

UNDINE.

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UNDINE.

CHAPTER I.

How the Knight came to the Fisherman's Cottage.

ONCE—it may be some hundreds of years ago—there lived a good old Fisherman, who, on a fine summer's evening, was sitting before the door, mending his nets. He dwelt in a land of exceeding beauty. The green slope upon which he had built his hut stretched far out into a great lake; and it seemed either that the cape, enamored of the glassy blue waters, had pressed forward into their bosom, or that the lake had lovingly folded in its arms the blooming promontory, with her waving grass and flowers, and the refreshing shade of her tall trees. Each bade the other welcome, and increased its own beauty by so doing. This lovely nook was scarcely ever visited by mankind, except by the Fisher-

man and his family. For behind the promontory lay a very wild forest, which, besides being gloomy and pathless, had too bad a name as the resort of wondrous spirits and goblins to be crossed by any one who could help it. Yet the pious old Fisherman went through it without being molested, whenever he walked to a large city beyond the forest to dispose of the costly fish that he caught in the lake. For him, indeed, there was little danger, even in that forest; for his thoughts were almost all thoughts of devotion, and his custom was to carol forth to Heaven a loud and heart-felt hymn on first setting foot within the treacherous shades.

As he sat this evening most peacefully over his nets, he was startled in an unwonted manner by a rustling sound in the forest, like that of a man and horse; and the noise came nearer and nearer. The dreams he had had in many a stormy night of the spirits of the forest started up before his mind, particularly the image of a gigantic, long, snow-white man, who kept nodding his head mysteriously. Nay, as he raised his eyes and looked into the forest, he could fancy he saw through the thick screen of leaves the nodding creature advance towards him. But he soon composed himself, recollecting that even in the heart of the woods nothing had ever befallen him: much less here, in the open air, could the bad spirits have power to touch him. He, moreover, repeated a text from the Bible aloud and earnestly, which quite restored his courage, and he almost laughed to see how his fancy had misled him. The white nodding

man suddenly resolved himself into a little brook he knew of old, which gushed bubbling out of the wood, and emptied itself into the lake. And the rustling had been caused by a horseman in gorgeous attire, who now came forwards towards the hut from beneath the trees.

He wore a scarlet mantle over his purple, gold-embroidered jerkin; a plume of red and purple feathers waved over his gold-colored barret cap; and from his golden belt hung a glittering jewelled sword. The white courser which carried him was of lighter make than the generality of chargers, and trod so airily that the enamelled turf seemed scarcely to bend under him. The aged fisherman could not quite shake off his uneasiness, although he told himself that so noble a guest could bring him no harm, and accordingly doffed his hat courteously, and interrupted his work when he approached.

The Knight reined in his horse, and asked whether they could both obtain one night's shelter.

"As to your horse, good sir," answered the Fisherman, "I have no better stable to offer him than the shady meadow, and no provender but the grass which grows upon it. But you shall yourself be heartily welcome to my poor house, and to the best of my supper and night lodging."

The stranger seemed quite content; he dismounted, and they helped each other to take off the horse's girth and saddle, after which

the Knight let him graze on the flowery pasture, saying to his host: "Even if I had found you less kind and hospitable, my good old man, you must have borne with me till tomorrow, for I see we are shut in by a wide lake, and Heaven forbid that I should cross the haunted forest again at nightfall!"

"We will not say much about that," replied the Fisherman; and he led his guest into the cottage.

There, close by the hearth, from whence a scanty fire shed its glimmering light over the clean little room, sat the Fisherman's old wife. When their noble guest came in, she rose to give him a kind welcome, but immediately resumed her place of honor without offering it to him, and the Fisherman said with a smile: "Do not take it amiss, young sir, if she does not give up to you the most comfortable place: it is the custom among us poor people that it should always belong to the oldest."

"Why, husband," said his wife quietly, "what are you thinking of? Our guest is surely a Christian gentleman, and how could it come into his kind young heart to turn old people out of their places? Sit down, my young lord," added she, turning to the Knight; "there stands a very comfortable chair for you; only remember it must not be too roughly handled, for one leg is not so steady as it has been." The Knight drew the chair carefully forwards, seated himself sociably, and soon felt quite at home in this little household, and as if he had just returned to it from a far journey.

The three friends began to converse openly and familiarly together. First the Knight asked a few questions about the forest, but the old man would not say much of that; least of all, said he, was it fitting to talk of such things at nightfall; but, on household concerns, and their own way of life, the old folks talked readily; and were pleased when the Knight told them of his travels, and that he had a castle near the source of the Danube, and that his name was Lord Huldbrand of Ringstetten. In the middle of their discourse, the stranger often observed a noise outside the small window, as if some one were dashing water against it. The old man knit his brows, and looked grave whenever this occurred: at last, when a great splash of water came full against the panes, and some found its way into the room, he could bear it no longer, but started up, crying: "Undine! will you never leave off these childish tricks,—when we have a stranger gentleman in the house too!" This produced silence outside, all but a sound of suppressed giggling, and the Fisherman said as he came back: "My honored guest, you must put up with this, and perhaps with many another piece of mischief; but she means no harm. It is our adopted child Undine: there is no breaking her of her childish ways, though she is eighteen years old now. But as I told you she is as good a child as ever lived, at bottom."

"Ay, so you may say!" rejoined his wife, shaking her head. "When you come home from fishing, or from a journey, her playful

nonsense may be pleasant enough. But to be keeping her out of mischief all day long, as I must do, and never get a word of sense from her nor a bit of help and comfort in my old age, is enough to weary the patience of a saint."

"Well, well," said the good man, "you feel towards Undine as I do towards the lake. Though its waves are apt enough to burst my banks and my nets, yet I love them for all that, and so do you love our pretty wench, with all her plaguy tricks. Don't you?"

"Why, one cannot be really angry with her, to be sure," said the dame, smiling.

Here the door flew open, and a beautiful fair creature tripped in, and said, playfully: "Well, father, you made game of me; where is your guest?" The next moment she perceived the Knight, and stood fixed in mute admiration; while Huldbrand gazed upon her lovely form, and tried to impress her image on his mind, thinking that he must avail himself of her amazement to do so, and that in a moment she would shrink away in a fit of bashfulness. But it proved otherwise. After looking at him a good while, she came up to him familiarly, knelt down beside him, and playing with a golden medal that hung from his rich chain, she said: "So, thou kind, thou beautiful guest! hast thou found us out in our poor hut at last? Why didst thou roam the world so many years without coming near us? Art come through the wild forest, my handsome friend?" The old woman allowed him no time to answer. She desired her to get up instantly, like a mod-

est girl, and to set about her work. But Undine, without replying, fetched a footstool and put it close to Huldbrand's chair, sat down there with her spinning, and said cheerfully: "I will sit and work here." The old man behaved as parents are apt to do with spoilt children. He pretended not to see Undine's waywardness, and was beginning to talk of something else: but she would not let him.—She said: "I asked our visitor where he came from, and he has not answered me yet."

"From the forest I came, you beautiful sprite," answered Huldbrand: and she continued:—

"Then you must tell me how you came there, and what wonderful adventures you had in it, for I know that nobody can escape without some."

Huldbrand could not help shuddering on being reminded of his adventures, and involuntarily glanced at the window, half expecting to see one of the strange beings he had encountered in the forest, grinning at him through it; but nothing was to be seen except the deep black night, which had now closed in. He recollected himself, and was just beginning his narrative, when the old man interposed: "Not just now, Sir Knight; this is no time for such tales."

But Undine jumped up passionately, put her beautiful arms akimbo, and standing before the Fisherman, exclaimed: "What, may not he tell his story, father? may not he? But I will have it: he must! He shall indeed!" And she stamped

angrily with her pretty feet, but it was all done in so comical and graceful a manner, that Huldbrand thought her still more bewitching in her wrath than in her playful mood.

Not so the old man; his long restrained anger burst out uncontrolled. He scolded Undine smartly for her disobedience, and unmannerly conduct to the stranger, his wife chiming in.

Undine then said: "Very well, if you will be quarrelsome, and not let me have my own way, you may sleep alone in your smoky old hut!" and she shot through the door like an arrow, and rushed into the dark night.

CHAPTER II.

How Undine first came to the Fisherman.

HULDBRAND and the Fisherman sprang from their seats, and tried to catch the angry maiden, but before they could reach the house door, Undine had vanished far into the thick shades, and not a sound of her light footsteps was to be heard, by which to track her course. Huldbrand looked doubtfully at his host; he almost thought that the whole fair vision which had so suddenly plunged into the night, must be a continuation of the phantom play which had whirled around him in his pas-

sage through the forest. But the old man mumbled through his teeth: "It is not the first time she has served us so. And here are we, left in our anxiety, with a sleepless night before us; for who can tell what harm may befall her, all alone out of doors till daybreak?"

"Then let us be after her, good father, for God's sake!" cried Huldbrand, eagerly.

The old man replied: "Where would be the use? It were a sin to let you set off alone in pursuit of the foolish girl, and my old legs would never overtake such a will-with-the-wisp, even if we could guess which way she is gone."

"At least let us call her, and beg her to come back," said Huldbrand; and he began calling after her in most moving tones: "Undine! oh, Undine! do return!"

The old man shook his head, and said that all the shouting in the world would do no good, with such a willful little thing. But yet he could not himself help calling out from time to time in the darkness: "Undine! ah, sweet Undine! I entreat thee, come back this once."

The Fisherman's words proved true. Nothing was to be seen or heard of Undine; and as her foster-father would by no means suffer Huldbrand to pursue her, they had nothing for it but to go in again. They found the fire on the hearth nearly burnt out, and the dame, who did not take to heart Undine's flight and danger so much as her husband, was gone to bed. The old man blew the coals, laid on dry wood, and by the light of the reviving flames he found a flagon of wine, which he put between himself

and his guest. "You are uneasy about that silly wench, Sir Knight," said he, "and we had better kill part of the night chatting and drinking than toss about in our beds trying to sleep in vain. Had not we?"

Huldbrand agreed: the Fisherman made him sit in his wife's empty armchair, and they both drank and talked together, as a couple of worthy friends should do. Whenever, indeed, there was the least stir outside the window, or even sometimes without any, one of them would look up and say: "There she comes." Then they would keep silence for a few moments, and as nothing came, resume their conversation, with a shake of the head and a sigh.

But as neither could think of much besides Undine, the best means they could devise for beguiling the time was that the Fisherman should relate, and the Knight listen to, the history of her first coming to the cottage. He began as follows:—

"One day, some fifteen years ago, I was carrying my fish through that dreary wood to the town. My wife stayed at home, as usual; and at that time she had a good and pretty reason for it,—the Lord had bestowed upon us (old as we already were) a lovely babe. It was a girl, and so anxious were we to do our best for the little treasure, that we began to talk of leaving our beautiful home, in order to give our darling a good education among other human beings. With us poor folks wishing is one thing and doing is quite another, Sir Knight; but what then? we can only try our

best. Well, then, as I plodded on, I turned over the scheme in my head. I was loth to leave our own dear nook, and it made me shudder to think, in the din and brawls of the town, so it is here we shall soon live, or in some place nearly as bad! Yet I never murmured against our good God, but rather thanked him in secret for His last blessing; nor can I say that I met with anything extraordinary in the forest, either coming or going: indeed nothing to frighten me has ever crossed my path. The Lord was ever with me in the awful shades."

Here he uncovered his bald head, and sat for a time in silent prayer; then putting his cap on again, he continued: "On this side of the wood it was,—on this side, that the sad news met me. My wife came towards me with eyes streaming like two fountains: she was in deep mourning. 'O, good Heaven!' I called out, 'where is our dear child? Tell me!'

"'Gone, dear husband,' she replied; and we went into our cottage, together, weeping silently. I looked for the little corpse, and then first heard how it had happened. My wife had been sitting on the shore with the child, and playing with it, all peace and happiness, when the babe all at once leaned over, as if she saw something most beautiful in the water; there she sat smiling, sweet angel, and stretching out her little hands; but the next moment she darted suddenly out of her arms, and down into the smooth waters. I made much search for the poor little corpse, but in vain; not a trace of her could I find.

"When evening was come, we, childless parents, were sitting together in the hut, silent; neither of us had a mind to speak, even if the tears had let us. We were looking idly into the fire. Just then something made a noise at the door. It opened, and a beautiful little maid, of three or four years old, stood there gaily dressed, and smiling in our faces. We were struck dumb with surprise, and at first hardly knew if she were a little human being, or only an empty shadow. But I soon saw that her golden hair and gay clothes were dripping wet, and it struck me the little fairy must have been in the water, and distressed for help. 'Wife,' said I, 'our dear child had no friend to save her: shall we not do for others what would have made our remaining days so happy, if any one had done it for us?' We undressed the child, put her to bed, and gave her a warm drink, while she never said a word, but kept smiling at us with her sky-blue eyes.

"The next morning we found that she had done herself no harm; and I asked her who were her parents, and what had brought her here; but she gave me a strange, confused answer. I am sure she must have been born far away, for these fifteen years have we kept her, without ever finding out where she came from; and besides, she is apt to let drop such marvellous things in her talk, that you might think she had lived in the moon. She will speak of golden castles, of crystal roofs, and I can't tell what besides. The only thing she has told us clearly is that as she was sailing

on the lake with her mother, she fell into the water, and when she recovered her senses found herself lying under these trees, in safety and comfort, upon our pretty shore.

"So now we had a serious, anxious charge thrown upon us. To keep and bring up the foundling, instead of our poor drowned child, —that was soon resolved upon. But who should tell us if she had yet been baptised or no? She knew not how to answer the question. That she was one of God's creatures, made for His glory and service, that much she knew, and anything that would glorify and please Him she was willing to have done. So my wife and I said to each other: 'If she has never been baptised, there is no doubt it should be done; and if she has, better do too much than too little in a matter of such consequence.' We therefore began to seek a good name for the child. Dorothea seemed to us the best; for I had once heard that meant God's gift; and she had indeed been sent us by Him as a special blessing, to comfort us in our misery. But she would not hear of that name. She said Undine was what her parents used to call her, and Undine she would still be. That I thought sounded like a heathen name, and occurred in no calendar; and I took counsel with a priest in the town about it. He also objected to the name Undine, and at my earnest request came home with me, through the dark forest, in order to baptise her. The little creature stood before us looking so gay and charming in her holiday clothes that the priest's heart warmed

towards her, and what with coaxing and willfulness she got the better of him, so that he clean forgot all the objections he had thought of to the name Undine. She was therefore so christened, and behaved particularly well and decently during the sacred rite, wild and unruly as she had always been before. For what my wife said just now was too true—we have indeed found her the wildest little fairy! If I were to tell you all—"

Here the Knight interrupted the Fisherman, to call his attention to a sound of roaring waters, which he had noticed already in the pauses of the old man's speech, and which now rose in fury as it rushed past the window. They both ran to the door. By the light of the newly risen moon they saw the brook which gushed out of the forest breaking wildly over its banks and whirling along stones and branches in its eddying course. A storm, as if awakened by the uproar, burst from the heavy clouds that were chasing each other across the moon; the lake howled under the wings of the wind; the trees on the shore groaned from top to bottom and bowed themselves over the rushing waters. "Undine! for God's sake, Undine!" cried the Knight and the old man. No answer was to be heard; and heedless now of any danger to themselves they ran off in different directions, calling her in frantic anxiety.

CHAPTER III.

How they found Undine again.

THE longer Huldbrand wandered in vain pursuit for Undine, the more bewildered he became. The idea that she might be a mere spirit of the woods sometimes returned upon him with double force; nay, amid the howling of waves and storm, the groaning of trees, and the wild commotion of the once peaceful spot, he might have fancied the whole promontory, its hut and its inhabitants, to be a delusion of magic, but that he still heard in the distance the Fisherman's piteous cries of "Undine!" and the old housewife's loud prayers and hymns above the whistling of the blast.

At last he found himself on the margin of the overflowing stream, and saw it by the moonlight rushing violently along, close to the edge of the mysterious forest, so as to make an island of the peninsula on which he stood. "Gracious Heaven!" thought he, "Undine may have ventured a step or two into that awful forest,—perhaps in her pretty waywardness, just because I would not tell her my story, and the swoln stream has cut her off, and left her weeping alone among the spectres!" A cry of terror escaped him, and he clambered down the bank by means of some stones and fallen

trees, hoping to wade or swim across the flood, and seek the fugitive beyond it. Fearful and unearthly visions did indeed float before him, like those he had met with in the morning, beneath these groaning, tossing branches. Especially he was haunted by the appearance of a tall, white man, whom he remembered but too well, grinning and nodding at him from the opposite bank. However, the thought of these grim monsters did but urge him onwards, as he recollected Undine, now perhaps in deadly fear among them, and alone.

He had laid hold of a stout pine branch, and, leaning on it, was standing in the eddy, though scarcely able to stem it, but he stepped boldly forwards, when a sweet voice exclaimed close behind him: "Trust him not,—trust not! The old fellow is tricksy,—the stream!"

Well he knew those silver tones. The moon was just disappearing behind a cloud, and he stood amid the deepening shades, made dizzy as the water shot by him with the speed of an arrow. Yet he would not desist. "And if thou art not truly there, if thou flittest before me an empty shadow, I care not to live: I will melt into air like thee, my beloved Undine!" This he cried aloud, and strode further into the flood.

"Look round, then; look round, fair youth!" he heard just behind him; and, looking round, he beheld by the returning moonbeams, on a fair island left by the flood, under some thickly interlaced branches, Undine, all smiles and loveliness, nestling in the flowery grass. How

much more joyfully than before did the young man use his pine staff to cross the waters! A few strides brought him through the flood that had parted them; and he found himself at her side, on the nook of soft grass, securely sheltered under the shade of the old trees. Undine half arose, and twined her arms around his neck in the green arbor, making him sit down by her on the turf. "Here you shall tell me all, my own friend," said she in a low whisper: "the cross old folks cannot overhear us. And our pretty bower of leaves is well worth their wretched hut."

"This is Heaven!" cried Huldbrand, as he clasped in his arms the beautiful flatterer.

Meantime the old man had reached the banks of the stream, and he called out: "So, Sir Knight, when I had made you welcome, as one honest man should another, here are you making love to my adopted child, to say nothing of your leaving me to seek her, alone and terrified, all night."

"I have but this moment found her, old man!" cried the Knight in reply.

"Well, I am glad of that," said the Fisherman. Now, then, bring her back to me at once.

But Undine would not hear of it. She had rather, she said, go quite away into the wild woods with the handsome stranger than return to the hut, where she had never had her own way, and which the Knight must sooner or later leave. Embracing Huldbrand, she sang with peculiar charm and grace: —

From misty cave the mountain wave
Leapt out and sought the main!
The Ocean's foam she made her home,
And ne'er returned again.

The old man wept bitterly as she sang, but this did not seem to move her. She continued to caress her lover till at length he said: "Undine, the poor old man's grief goes to my heart, if not to yours. Let us go back to him."

Astonished, she raised her large blue eyes towards him, and after a pause answered slowly and reluctantly: "To please you, I will: whatever you like pleases me too. But the old man yonder must first promise me that he will let you tell me all you saw in the forest, and the rest we shall see about."

"Only come back: do come!" cried the Fisherman, and not another word could he say. At the same moment he stretched his arms over the stream towards her, and nodded his head by way of giving her the desired promise; and as his white hair fell over his face, it gave him a strange look, and reminded Huldbrand involuntarily of the nodding, white man in the woods. Determined, however, that nothing should stop him, the young Knight took the fair damsel in his arms, and carried her through the short space of foaming flood which divided the island from the mainland. The old man fell upon Undine's neck and rejoiced, and kissed her in the fullness of his heart. His aged wife also came up, and welcomed their recovered child most warmly. All re-

proaches were forgotten; the more so as Undine seemed to have left her sauciness behind, and overwhelmed her foster parents with kind words and caresses.

When these transports of joy had subsided, and they began to look about them, the rosy dawn was just shedding its glow over the lake, the storm had ceased, and the birds were singing merrily on the wet branches. As Undine insisted upon hearing the story of the Knight's adventure, the old folks cheerfully indulged her. Breakfast was set out under the trees between the cottage and the lake; and they sat down before it with glad hearts, Undine placing herself resolutely on the grass at the Knight's feet. Huldbrand began his narrative as follows.

CHAPTER IV.

Of what had befallen the Knight in the Forest.

"ABOUT eight days ago I rode into the imperial city beyond this forest. A grand tournament and tilting was held there, and I spared neither lance nor steed. As I stood still a moment to rest myself, in a pause of the noble game, and had just given my helmet in charge to a squire, my eye fell upon a most beautiful woman, who stood, richly adorned, in one of the galleries, looking on. I inquired

her name, and found that this charming lady was Bertalda, the adopted daughter of one of the principal lords in the neighborhood. I observed that her eye was upon me too, and, as is the way with us young knights, I had not been slack before, but I now fought more bravely still. That evening I was Bertalda's partner in the dance, and so I was again every evening during the jousting."

Here a sudden pain in his left hand, which hung beside him, checked the Knight in his tale, and he looked at his hand. Undine's pearly teeth had bitten one of his fingers sharply, and she looked very black at him. But the next moment that look changed into an expression of tender sadness, and she whispered low: "So you are faithless too!" Then she hid her face in her hands, and the Knight proceeded with his tale, though staggered and perplexed.

"That Bertalda is a high-spirited, extraordinary maid. On the second day she charmed me far less than the first, and on the third less still. But I remained with her because she was more gracious to me than to any other knight, and so it fell out that I asked her in jest for one of her gloves. 'You shall have it,' said she, 'if you will visit the haunted forest alone, and bring me an account of it.' It was not that I cared much for her glove, but the words had been spoken, and a Knight that loves his fame does not wait to be twice urged to such a feat."

"I thought she had loved you," interrupted Undine.

Undine, Huldbrand, and the Priest in the forest.

"It looked like it," he replied.

"Well," cried the maiden, laughing, "she must be a fool indeed! To drive *him* away whom she loves! and into a haunted forest besides! The forest and its mysteries might have waited long enough, for me."

"I set out yesterday morning," continued the Knight, smiling kindly at Undine. "The stems of the trees looked so bright in the morning sunshine, as it played upon the green turf, and the leaves whispered together so pleasantly, that I could not but laugh at those who imagined any evil to lurk in such a beautiful place. I shall very soon have ridden through it and back again, thought I, pushing on cheerily, and, before I was aware of it, I found myself in the depths of its leafy shades, and the plains behind me far out of sight. It then occurred to me, that I was likely enough to lose my way in this wilderness of trees, and that this might be the only real danger to which the traveller was here exposed. So I halted, and took notice of the course of the sun: it was now high in the heavens.

"On looking up, I saw something black among the boughs of a tall oak. I took it for a bear, and seized my rifle: but it addressed me in a human voice, most hoarse and grating, saying: 'If I did not break off the twigs up here, what should we do tonight for fuel to roast you with, Sir Simpleton?' And he gnashed his teeth and rattled the boughs so as to startle my horse, which ran away with me

before I could make out what kind of a devil it was."

"You should not mention *his* name," said the Fisherman, crossing himself. His wife silently did the same, while Undine turned her beaming eyes upon her lover, and said:

"He is safe now: it is well they did not really roast him. Go on, pretty youth."

He continued: "My terrified horse had almost dashed me against many a trunk and branch. He was running down with fright and heat, and yet there was no stopping him. At length he rushed madly towards the brink of a stony precipice; but here, as it seemed to me, a tall, white man threw himself across the plunging animal's path, and made him start back and stop. I then recovered the control of him, and found that instead of a white man my preserver was no other than a bright, silvery brook, which gushed down from a hill beside me, checking and crossing my horse in his course."

"Thanks, dear brook!" cried Undine, clapping her hands. But the old man shook his head, and seemed lost in thought.

"Scarcely had I settled myself in the saddle, and got firm hold of my reins again," proceeded Huldbrand, "when an extraordinary little man sprang up beside me, wizen and hideous beyond measure. He was of a yellow-brown hue, and his nose almost as big as the whole of his body. He grinned at me in the most fulsome way with his wide mouth, bowing and scraping every moment. As I could not abide these

antics, I thanked him abruptly, pulled my still trembling horse another way, and thought I would seek some other adventure, or perhaps go home: for during my wild gallop the sun had passed his meridian, and was now declining westward. But the little imp sprang round like lightning, and stood in front of my horse again.

"'Make way!' cried I impatiently; 'the animal is unruly, and may run over you.'

"'Oh,' snarled the imp, with a laugh more disgusting than before, 'first give me a piece of coin for having caught your horse so nicely. But for me, you and your pretty beast would be lying in the pit down yonder. Whew!'

"'Only have done with your grimaces,' said I, 'and take your money along with you, though it is all a lie. Look there, it was that honest brook that saved me, not you,—you pitiful wretch?' So saying, I dropped a gold coin into his comical cap, which he held out towards me like a beggar.

"I trotted on, but he still followed screaming, and, with inconceivable rapidity, whisked up to my side. I put my horse into a gallop: he kept pace with me, though with much difficulty, and twisted his body into various frightful and ridiculous attitudes, crying at each step as he held up the money: 'Bad coin! bad gold! bad gold! bad coin!' And this he shrieked in such a ghastly tone that you would have expected him to drop down dead after each cry.

"At last I stopped, much vexed, and asked: 'What do you want with your shrieks. Take

another gold coin,—take two if you will, only let me alone.'

"He began his odious smirking again, and snarled: 'It's not gold, it's not gold that I want, young gentleman: I have rather more of that than I can use. You shall see.'

"All at once the surface of the ground became transparent. It looked like a smooth globe of green glass; and within it I saw a crowd of goblins at play with silver and gold. Tumbling about, head over heels, they pelted each other in sport, making a toy of the precious metals, and powdering their faces with gold dust. My ugly companion stood half above, half below the surface. He made the others reach up to him quantities of gold, and showed it me laughing, and then flung it into the fathomless depths beneath. He displayed the piece of gold I had given him to the goblins below, who held their sides with laughing, and hissed at me in scorn. At length all their bony fingers pointed at me together; and louder and louder, closer and closer, wilder and wilder, grew the turmoil as it rose towards me, till not my horse only but I myself was terrified. I put spurs into him, and cannot tell how long I may have scoured the forest this time.

"When at last I halted, the shades of evening had closed in. Through the branches I saw a white foot-path gleaming, and hoped it must be a road out of the forest to the town. I resolved to work my way thither; but, lo! an indistinct dead-white face, with ever-changing features, peeped at me through the leaves. I

tried to avoid it, but wherever I went, there it was. Provoked, I attempted to push my horse against it; then it splashed us both over with white foam, and we turned away blinded for the moment. So it drove us, step by step, further and further from the foot-path, and indeed never letting us go on undisturbed but in one direction. While we kept to this, it was close upon our heels, but did not thwart us. Having looked around once or twice, I observed that the white foaming head was placed on a gigantic body, equally white. I sometimes doubted my first impression, and thought it merely a waterfall, but I never could satisfy myself that it was so. Wearily did my horse and I precede this active white pursuer, who often nodded at us, as if saying: 'That's right! that's right!' and it ended by our issuing from the wood here, where I rejoiced to see your lawn, the lake, and this cottage, and where the long white man vanished."

"Thank Heaven, he is gone," said the old man; and he then proceeded to consider how his guest could best return to his friends in the city. Upon this, Undine was heard to laugh in a whisper.

Huldbrand observed it, and said: "I thought you had wished me to stay; and now you seem pleased when we talk of my going?"

"Because," replied Undine, "you cannot get away. Only try to cross the swoln brook, in a boat, on horseback, or on foot. Or rather, do not try, for you would be dashed to pieces by the branches and stones that it hurls along.

And as to the lake, I know how that is: Father never ventures across it in his boat."

Huldbrand laughed, and got up to see whether she had spoken true. The old man went with him: and the maiden tripped along playfully by their side. They found she had told them no worse than the truth, and the Knight resigned himself to staying in the island, as it might now be called, till the floods had subsided. As they returned homewards, he whispered in his pretty companion's ear: "Well, my little Undine, are you angry at my staying?"

"Ah," said she sullenly, "never mind. If I had not bitten you, who knows what might have come out in your story of Bertalda?"

CHAPTER V.

Of the life which the Knight led on the Island.

HAS it ever befallen thee, gentle reader, after many ups and downs in this troublesome world, to alight upon a spot where thou foundest rest; where the love which is born with us for fireside comfort and domestic peace revived in thee; where thou couldst fancy thy early home with the blossoms of childhood, its pure, heartfelt affection, and the holy influence breathed from thy fathers' graves, to be re-

stored to thee, and that it must indeed be 'good for thee to be here, and to build tabernacles?'

The charm may have been broken, the dream dispelled; but that has nothing to do with our present picture: nor wilt thou care to dwell on such bitter moments; but recall to mind that period of unspeakable peace, that foretaste of angelic rest which was granted thee, and thou wilt partly conceive what the Knight Huldbrand felt while he lived on the promontory. Often, with secret satisfaction, did he mark the forest streams rolling by more wildly every day. Its bed became wider and wider, and he felt the period of his seclusion from the world must be still prolonged. Having found an old cross-bow in a corner of the cottage, and mended it, he spent part of his days roving about, waylaying the birds that flew by, and bringing whatever he killed to the kitchen as rare game. When he came back laden with spoil, Undine would often scold him for taking the life of the dear little joyous creatures, soaring in the blue depths of heaven. She would even weep bitterly over the dead birds. But if he came home empty-handed, she found fault with his awkwardness and laziness, which obliged them to be content with fish and crabs for dinner. Either way, he took delight in her pretty fits of anger,—the more so as she rarely failed to make up for them by the fondest caresses afterwards. The old folks, having been in the young people's confidence from the first, unconsciously looked upon them as a betrothed or even married pair, shut out from the world

with them in this retreat, and bestowed upon them for comforts in their old age. And this very seclusion helped to make the young Knight feel as if he were already Undine's bridegroom. It seemed to him that the whole world was contained within the surrounding waters, or at any rate that he could never more cross that charmed boundary, and rejoin other human beings. And if at times the neighing of his steed reminded him of former feats of chivalry, and seemed to ask for more; if his coat of arms, embroidered on the saddle and trappings, caught his eye; or if his good sword fell from the nail on which he had hung it, and slipped out of its scabbard, he would silence the misgivings that arose by thinking Undine is not a fisherman's daughter, but most likely sprung from some highly noble family in distant lands. The only thing that ever ruffled him was to hear the old woman scolding Undine. The wayward girl only laughed at her; but to him it seemed as if his own honor were touched; and yet he could not blame the good wife, for Undine mostly deserved ten times worse than she got, therefore he still felt kindly towards the old dame, and these little rubs scarcely disturbed the even current of their lives.

At length, however, a grievance did arise. The Knight and the Fisherman were in the habit of sitting cheerfully over a flask of wine, both at noon and also at eventide while the wind whistled around, as it generally did at night. But they had now exhausted the whole stock which the Fisherman had long since

brought from the town with him, and they both missed it sadly. Undine laughed at them all day for it, but they could not join in her mirth as heartily as usual. Towards evening she left the cottage, saying she could no longer bear such long dismal faces. As the twilight looked stormy and the waters were beginning to moan and heave, the Knight and the old man ran out anxiously to fetch her back, remembering the agony of that night when Huldbrand first came to the cottage. But they were met by Undine, clapping her hands merrily. "What will you give me if I get you some wine? but, indeed, I want no reward for it," she added: "I shall be satisfied if you will but look brighter, and find more to say than you have done all these tedious mornings. Come along, the floods have washed a barrel ashore, and I will engage to sleep a whole week through if it is not a barrel of wine!"

The men both followed her to a shady creek, and there found a barrel, which did look as if it contained the generous liquor which they longed for. They rolled it towards the hut as fast as they could, for a heavy storm seemed stalking across the sky, and there was light enough left to show them the waves of the lake tossing up their foaming heads, as if looking out for the rain which would soon pour down upon them. Undine lent a hand in the work, and presently, when the shower threatened to break instantly over their heads, she spoke to the big clouds in playful defiance: "You, your there! mind you do not give us a

drenching; we are some way from home yet." The old man admonished her that this was sinful presumption, but she laughed slily to herself, and no harm came of it. Beyond their hopes they all three reached the comfortable fireside, with their prize, unhurt; and it was not till they had opened the barrel and found it to contain excellent wine that the rain broke from the heavy clouds in torrents, and they heard the storm roaring among the trees, and over the lake's heaving billows.

A few bottles were soon filled from the great barrel, enough to last them several days; and they sat sipping and chatting over the bright fire, secure from the raging tempest. But the old man's heart presently smote him. "Dear me," said he, "here are we making merry over the blessings of Providence while the owner of it has perhaps been carried away by the flood, and lost his life!" "No, that he has not," said Undine, smiling; and she filled the Knight's glass again. He replied, "I give you my word, good father, that if I knew how to find and save him, no danger should deter me: I would not shrink from setting out in this darkness. This much I promise you, if ever I set foot in an inhabited country again, I will make inquiry after him or his heirs, and restore to them twice or three times the value of the wine." This pleased the old man: he gave an approving nod to the Knight, and drained his glass with a better conscience and a lighter heart. But Undine said to Huldbrand: "Do as you like with your money; you

may make what compensation you please; but as to setting out and wandering after him, that was hastily said. I should cry my heart out if we chanced to lose you; and had not you rather stay with me and with the good wine?" "Why, yes!" said Huldbrand, laughing. "Well then," rejoined Undine, "it was a foolish thing you talked of doing; charity begins at home, you know." The old woman turned away, shaking her head and sighing; her husband forgot his usual indulgence for the pretty lassie, and reproved her sharply. "One would think," said he, "you had been reared by Turks and heathens; God forgive you and us, you perverse child." "Ay but it *is* my way of thinking," pursued Undine, "whoever has reared me, so what is the use of your talking?" "Peace!" cried the Fisherman; and she, who with all her wildness was sometimes cowed in a moment, clung tremblingly to Huldbrand, and whispered: "And are you angry with me, dear Friend?" The Knight pressed her soft hand, and stroked down her ringlets. Not a word could he say; his distress at the old man's harshness towards Undine had sealed his lips; and so each couple remained sitting opposite the other in moody silence and constraint.

CHAPTER VI.

Of a Bridal.

A GENTLE tap at the door broke the silence, and made them all start: it sometimes happens that a mere trifle, coming quite unexpectedly, strikes the senses with terror. They looked at each other, hesitating; the tap was repeated, accompanied by a deep groan, and the Knight grasped his sword. But the old man muttered: "If it is what I fear, it is not a sword that will help us!" Undine, however, stepped forward to the door, and said boldly and sharply: "If you are after any mischief, you spirits of earth, Kühleborn shall teach you manners."

The terror of the others increased at these strange words; they looked at the maiden with awe, and Huldbrand was just mustering courage to ask her a question, when a voice answered her from without: "I am no spirit of earth; call me if you will a spirit pent in mortal clay. If you fear God and will be charitable, you dwellers in the cottage, open the door to me. Undine opened it before he had done speaking, and held out a lamp into the stormy night, so as to show them the figure of an aged Priest, who started back as the radiant beauty of Undine flashed upon his sight. Well might

he suspect magic and witchery when so bright a vision shone out of a mean-looking cottage: he accordingly began a canticle, "All good spirits give praise to the Lord!"

"I am no ghost," said Undine, smiling; "am I so frightful to behold? And you may see that a pious saying has no terrors for me. I worship God, too, and praise Him after my own fashion. He has not created us all alike. Come in, venerable father: you will find worthy folks here."

The holy man walked in, bowing and casting his eyes around, and looking most mild and venerable. Every fold of his dark garment was dripping with water, and so were his long white beard and hoary locks. The Fisherman and the Knight led him to a bedroom, and gave him a change of clothing, while the women dried his wet garments by the hearth fire. The aged stranger thanked them with all humility and gentleness, but would by no means accept of the Knight's splendid mantle which he offered him. He chose himself an old gray wrapper of the Fisherman's instead. So they returned to the kitchen. The dame gave up her own arm-chair to the Priest, and had no peace till he sat himself down in it: "For," said she, "you are old and weary, and a priest besides." Undine pushed her little foot-stool, on which she generally sat by Huldbrand, towards the good man's feet, and altogether behaved to him quite properly and gracefully. Huldbrand took notice of this, in a playful whisper; but she answered very gravely: "Because he is a

servant of the Maker of us all. That is too serious for a jest."

Meantime the two men set meat and wine before their guest, and when he had recruited his strength a little, he began his story; saying that the day before he had left his monastery, which was a good way off beyond the lake, intending to visit the bishop at his palace, and report to him the distress which these almost supernatural floods had caused the monks and their poor tenantry. After going around a long way, to avoid these very floods, he had been obliged towards evening to cross an arm of the overflowing lake, with the help of two honest sailors. "But," added he, "no sooner had our little vessel touched the waves than we were wrapped in the tremendous storm which is still raging over our heads now. It looked as if the waters had only awaited our coming to give a loose to their fury. The oars were soon dashed from the seamen's hands, and we saw their broken fragments carried further and further from us by the waves. We floated on the wave tops helpless, driven by the furious tempest towards your shores, which we saw in the distance whenever the clouds parted for a moment. The boat was tossed about still more wildly and gidily, and whether it upset or I fell out I cannot tell. I floated on, with the dark prospect of instant death before me, till a wave landed me at the foot of a tree in this your island.

"Ay, island, indeed!" said the Fisherman. "It was a promontory but a short time ago;

but since the stream and our lake are gone mad together everything about us is new and strange."

The Priest continued: "As I crept along the waterside in the dark, with a wild uproar around me, something caught my eye, and presently I discried a beaten pathway, which was soon lost in the shades. I spied the light in your cottage, and ventured to come hither; and I cannot sufficiently thank my heavenly Father, who has not only delivered me from the waters but guided me to such kind souls. I feel this blessing the more as it is very likely I may never see any faces but yours again." "How so?" asked the Fisherman. "Can you guess how long this fury of the elements may last?" replied the Priest. "And I am an old man. My stream of life may perhaps lose itself in the earth before these floods subside. And besides, it may be the foaming waters will divide you from the forest more and more, till you are unable to get across in your fishing boat; and the people of the mainland, full of their own concerns, would quite forget you in your retreat."

Shuddering and crossing herself, the Fisherman's wife exclaimed: "God forbid!" But the old man smiled at her and said: "What creatures we are! That would make no difference to you at least, my dear wife. How many years is it since you have set foot within the forest? And have you seen any face but Undine's and mine? Lately indeed we have had the good Knight and Priest besides. But they

would stay with us; so that if we are forgotten in this island, you will be the gainer."

"So I see," said the dame, "yet somehow it is cheerless to feel ourselves quite cut off from the rest of the world, however seldom we had seen it before." "Then *you* will stay with us!" murmured Undine in a sweet voice, and she pressed closer to Huldbrand's side. But he was lost in deep thought. Since the Priest had last spoken, the land beyond the wild stream had seemed to his fancy more dark and distant than ever, while the flowery island he lived in, and his bride the fairest flower in the picture, bloomed and smiled more and more freshly in his imagination. Here was the Priest at hand to unite them; and, to complete his resolution, the old dame just then darted a reproving look at Undine for clinging to her lover's side in the holy man's presence. An angry lecture seemed on the point of beginning. He turned towards the Priest, and these words burst from him: "You see before you a betrothed pair, reverend Sir. If this damsel and the kind old people will consent, you shall unite us this very evening."

The old folks were much surprised. Such a thought had often crossed their minds, but they had never till this moment heard it uttered: and it now fell upon their ears like an unexpected thing. Undine had suddenly become quite grave, and sat musing deeply, while the Priest inquired into various circumstances, and asked the old couple's consent to the deed. After some deliberation, they gave it. The

dame went away to prepare the young people's bridal chamber, and to fetch from her stores two consecrated tapers for the wedding ceremony. Meanwhile the Knight was pulling two rings off his gold chain for himself and his bride to exchange. But this roused Undine from her revery, and she said: "Stay! my parents did not send me into the world quite penniless. They looked forward long ago to this occasion, and provided for it." She quickly withdrew, and returned bringing two costly rings, one of which she gave to her betrothed and kept the other herself. This astonished the old Fisherman, and still more his wife, who came in soon after; for they neither of them had seen these jewels about the child. "My parents," said Undine, "had these rings sewed into the gay dress which I wore when first I came to you. They charged me to let no one know of them till my wedding day came; therefore I took them secretly out of the dress, and have kept them hidden till this evening."

Here the Priest put a stop to the conversation by lighting the holy tapers, placing them on the table, and calling the young pair to him. With few and solemn words he joined their hands; the aged couple gave their blessing, while the bride leaned upon her husband, pensive and trembling.

When it was over, the Priest said: "You are strange people after all! What did you mean by saying you were the only inhabitants of this island? During the whole ceremony there was a fine-looking tall man, in a white

cloak, standing just outside the window opposite me. He must be near the door still, if you like to invite him in." "Heaven forbid!" said the dame, shuddering. The old man shook his head without speaking: and Huldbrand rushed to the window. He could fancy he saw a streak of white, but it was soon lost in darkness. So he assured the Priest he must have been mistaken; and they all sat down comfortably around the fire.

CHAPTER VII.

How the rest of the Evening passed away.

UNDINE had been perfectly quiet and well-behaved both before and during the marriage ceremony; but now her wild spirits seemed the more uncontrollable from the restraint they had undergone, and rose to an extravagant height. She played all manner of childish tricks on her husband, her foster parents, and even the venerable Priest, and when the old woman began to check her, one or two words from Huldbrand, who gravely called Undine "his wife," reduced her to silence. The Knight himself, however, was far from being pleased at Undine's childishness: but no hint or sign would stop her. When-

ever she perceived his disapproving looks—which she occasionally did—it subdued her for the moment: she would sit down by him, whisper something playfully in his ear, and so dispel the frown as it gathered on his brow. But the next instant some wild nonsense would dart into her head, and set her off worse than ever. At last the Priest said to her, in a kind but grave manner: "My dear young lady, no one that beholds you can be severe upon you, it is true; but remember it is your duty to keep watch over your soul, that it may be ever in harmony with that of your wedded husband." "Soul!" cried Undine, laughing, "that sounds very fine, and for most people may be very edifying and moral advice. But if one has no soul at all, pray how is one to keep watch over it? And that is my case." The Priest was deeply hurt, and turned away his face in mingled sorrow and anger. But she came up to him beseechingly and said: "Nay, hear me before you are angry, for it grieves me to see you displeased, and you would not distress any creature who has done you no harm. Only have patience with me and I will tell you all, from the beginning."

They saw she was preparing to give them a regular history; but she stopped short, appearing thrilled by some secret recollection, and burst into a flood of gentle tears. They were quite at a loss what to think of her, and gazed upon her, distressed from various causes. At length drying her eyes, she looked at the Priest earnestly and said: "There must be

much to love in a soul, but much that is awful too. For God's sake, holy father, tell me—were it not better to be still without one?" She waited breathlessly for an answer, restraining her tears. Her hearers had all risen from their seats, and now stepped back from her, shuddering. She seemed to have no eyes but for the saintly man; her countenance assumed an expression of anxiety and awe, which yet more alarmed the others. "Heavy must be the burden of a soul," added she, as no one answered her,—"heavy indeed! for the mere approach of mine overshadows me with anxious melancholy. And ah! how light-hearted, how joyous I used to be!" A fresh burst of weeping overcame her, and she covered her face with her veil.

The Priest then approached her with much gravity and adjured her by the holiest names to confess the truth, if any evil lurked in her unknown to them. But she fell on her knees, before him, repeated after him all his words of piety, gave praise to God, and declared she was in charity with all the world. The Priest turned to the young Knight: "Sir, bridegroom," said he, "I leave you alone with her whom I have made your wife. As far as I can discover, there is no evil, although much that is mysterious in her. I exhort you to be sober, loving, and faithful." So he went out, and the old people followed, crossing themselves.

Undine was still on her knees; she uncovered her face and looked timidly at Huldbrand, saying: "Ah, thou wilt surely cast me off now·

and yet I have done nothing wrong, poor, poor child that I am!" This she said with so touching and gentle an expression that her husband forgot all the gloom and mystery that had chilled his heart: he hastened towards her and raised her in his arms. She smiled through her tears—it was like the glow of dawn shining upon a clear fountain. "Thou canst not forsake me!" whispered she in accents of the firmest reliance; and she stroked his cheeks with her soft little hands. He tried to shake off the gloomy thoughts which still lurked in a corner of his mind, suggesting to him that he had married a fairy or some shadowy being from the world of spirits. One question, however, he could not help asking: "My dear little Undine, just tell me one thing, what was that you said about spirits of earth, and Kühleborn, when the Priest knocked at the door?" "All nonsense!" said Undine, laughing, with her usual gaiety. "First I frightened you with it, and then you frightened me. And that is the end of the story, and of our wedding day!" "No, it is not over," said her now delighted lover. He extinguished the tapers, and by the light of the moon which beamed brightly through the casement, he carried his beautiful wife into the bridal chamber.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Day after the Marriage.

A BRIGHT morning light wakened the young people, and Huldbrand lay musing silently. As often as he had dropped asleep, he had been scared by horrible dreams of spectres, who suddenly took the form of fair women, or of fair women who were transformed into dragons. And when he started up from these grim visions, and saw the pale cold moonlight streaming in at the window, he would turn an anxious look towards Undine: she lay slumbering in undisturbed beauty and peace. Then he would compose himself to sleep again—soon again to wake in terror. When he looked back upon all this in broad daylight, he was angry with himself for having let a suspicion, a shade of distrust of his beautiful wife, enter his mind. He frankly confessed to her this injustice; she answered him only by pressing his hand, and sighing from the bottom of her heart. But a look, such as her eyes had never before given, of the deepest and most confiding tenderness, left him no doubt that she forgave him. So he arose cheerfully, and joined the family in the sitting room. The three others were gathered around the hearth, looking uneasy, and neither of them having ventured to

speak his thoughts yet. The Priest seemed to be secretly praying for deliverance from evil. But when the young husband appeared, beaming with happiness, the care-worn faces brightened up; nay, the Fisherman ventured upon a few courteous jokes with the Knight, which won a smile even from the good housewife. Meanwhile Undine had dressed herself, and now came in: they could not help rising to meet her, and stood still, astonished: the young creature was the same, yet so different. The Priest was the first to address her, with an air of paternal kindness, and when he raised his hands in benediction, the fair woman sank on her knees, trembling with pious awe. In a few meek and humble words she begged him to forgive the folly of the day before, and besought him with great emotion to pray for the salvation of her soul. Then rising, she kissed her foster parents, and thanking them for all their kindness, she said: "Oh, now I feel from the bottom of my heart how much you have done for me, how deeply grateful I ought to be, dear, dear people!" She seemed as if she could not caress them enough; but soon observing the dame glance towards the breakfast, she went towards the hearth, busied herself arranging and preparing the meal, and would not suffer the good woman to take the least trouble herself.

So she went on all day; at once a young matron, and a bashful, tender, delicate bride. The three who knew her best were every moment expecting this mood to change, and give

place to one of her crazy fits; but they watched her in vain. There was still the same angelic mildness and sweetness. The Priest could not keep his eyes away from her; and he said more than once to the bridegroom: "Sir, it was a great treasure which Heaven bestowed upon you yesterday, by my poor ministration; cherish her worthily, and she will be to you a blessing in time and eternity."

Towards evening Undine clasped the Knight's arm with modest tenderness, and gently led him out before the door, where the rays of the setting sun were lighting up the fresh grass, and the tall, taper stems of trees. The young wife's face wore a melting expression of love and sadness, and her lips quivered with some anxious, momentous secret, which as yet betrayed itself only by scarce audible sighs. She silently led her companion onwards. If he spoke, she replied by a look which gave him no direct answer, but revealed a whole heaven of love and timid submission. So they reached the banks of the stream which had overflowed, and the Knight started on finding the wild torrent changed into a gentle, rippling brook, without a trace of its former violence left. "By tomorrow it will have dried up completely," said the bride in a faltering voice, "and thou mayest begone whither thou wilt." "Not without thee, my Undine," said the Knight playfully. "Consider, if I had a mind to forsake thee, the Church, the Emperor, and his ministers might step in, and bring thy truant home." "No, no, you are free; it shall be as

you please," murmured Undine, half tears, half smiles. "But I think thou wilt not cast me away. Is not my heart bound up in thine? Carry me over to that little island opposite. There I will know my fate. I could indeed easily step through the little waves; but I love to rest in thine arms; and thou *mayest* cast me off: this may be the last time." Huldbrand, full of anxious emotion, knew not how to answer. He took her up in his arms and carried her over, now recollecting that from this very island he had borne her home to the Fisherman on the night of his arrival. When there, he placed his fair burden on the turf, and was going to sit down by her, but she said: "No, sit there, opposite me. I will read my doom in your eyes before your lips have spoken it. Now listen, and I will tell you all." And she began: —

"You must know, my own love, that in each element exists a race of beings whose form scarcely differs from yours, but who very seldom appear to mortal sight. In the flames, the wondrous Salamanders glitter and disport themselves. In the depths of earth dwell the dry, spiteful race of Gnomes. The forests are peopled by Wood-nymphs, who are also spirits of air; and the seas, the rivers, and brooks contain the numberless tribes of Water-sprites. Their echoing halls of crystal, where the light of heaven pours in, with its sun and stars, are glorious to dwell in; the gardens contain beautiful coral plants, with blue and red fruits; they wander over bright sea sands and gay col-

ored shells, among the hidden treasures of the old world, too precious to be bestowed on these latter days, and long since covered by the silver mantle of the deep. Many a noble monument still gleams there below, bedewed by the tears of ocean, who garlands it with flowery sea weeds and wreaths of shells. Those that dwell there below are noble and lovely to behold, far more so than mankind. Many a fisherman has had a passing glimpse of some fair water-nymph, rising out of the sea with her song. He would then spread the report of her apparition, and these wonderful beings came to be called *Undines*. And you now see before you, my love, an Undine."

The Knight tried to persuade himself that his fair wife was in one of her wild moods, and had invented this strange tale in sport. But though he said this to himself, he could not for a moment believe it. A mysterious feeling thrilled him; and, unable to utter a word, he kept his eyes rivited on the beautiful speaker. She shook her head sadly, heaved a deep sigh, and went on.

"We might be happier than our human fellow-creatures (for we call you fellow-creatures, as our forms are alike), but for one great evil. We, and the other children of the elements, go down to the dust, body and spirit: not a trace of us remains; and when the time comes for you to rise again to a glorified existence, we shall have perished with our native sands, flames, winds, and waves. For we have no souls: the elements move us, obey us while we

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tive, close over us when we die; and we light spirits live as free from care as the nightingale, the gold fish, and all such bright children of nature. But no creatures rest content in their appointed place. My father, who is a mighty prince in the Mediterranean sea, determined that his only child should be endowed with a soul, even at the cost of much suffering, which is ever the lot of souls. But a soul can be infused into one of our race only by being united in the closest bands of love to one of yours. And now I have obtained a soul. To thee I owe it, oh, best beloved! and for that gift I shall ever bless thee, unless thou dost devote my whole futurity to misery. For what is to become of me should thou recoil from me and cast me off? Yet I would not detain thee by deceit. And if I am to leave thee, say so now: go back to the land alone. I will plunge into this brook. It is my uncle who leads a wonderful, sequestered life in this forest, away from all his friends. But he is powerful, and allied to many great rivers; and as he brought me here to the Fisherman a gay and laughing child, so he is ready to take me back to my parents, a loving, suffering, forsaken woman."

She would have gone on, but Huldbrand, full of compassion and love, caught her in his arms and carried her back. There, with tears and kisses, he swore never to forsake his beloved wife; and said he felt more blessed than the Greek statuary Pygmalion, whose beautiful statue dame Venus transformed into a living woman. Hanging on his arm in peaceful reli-

ance, Undine returned; and she felt from her inmost heart how little cause she had to regret the crystal palaces of her father.

CHAPTER IX.

How the Knight and his young Bride departed

WHEN Huldbrand awoke from sleep the next morning, he missed his fair companion; and again he was tormented with a doubt whether his marriage and the lovely Undine might not be all a fairy dream. But she soon reappeared, came up to him and said: "I have been out early, to see if my uncle had kept his word. He has recalled all the straying waters into his quiet bed, and now takes his lonely and pensive course through the forest as he used to do. His friends in the lake and the air are gone to rest also; all things have returned to their usual calmness; and you may set out homewards on dry land as soon as you please." Huldbrand felt as if dreaming still, so little could he understand his wife's wonderful relations. But he took no notice of this, and his sweet Undine's gentle attentions soon charmed every uneasy thought away.

A little while after, as they stood at the door together, looking over the fair scene with its

boundary of clear waters, his heart yearned so towards this cradle of his love, that he said: "But why should we go away so soon? we shall never spend happier days in yonder world than we have passed in this peaceful nook. Let us at least see two or three more suns go down here." "As my Lord wishes," answered Undine, with cheerful submission: "but you see the old people will be grieved at parting with me, whenever it is; and if we give them time to become acquainted with my soul, and with its new powers of loving and honoring them, I fear that when I go their aged hearts will break under the load of sorrow. As yet, they take my gentle mood for a passing whim, such as they saw me liable to formerly, like a calm on the lake when the winds are lulled; and they will soon begin to love some favorite tree or flower in my place. They must not learn to know this newly obtained, affectionate heart in the first overflowings of its tenderness, just at the moment when they are to lose me for this world; and how could I disguise it from them, if we remained together longer?"

Huldbrand agreed with her. He went to the old couple, and finding them ready to consent, he resolved upon setting out that very hour. The Priest offered to accompany them; after a hasty farewell, the pretty bride was placed on the horse by her husband, and they crossed the stream's dry bed quickly, and entered the forest. Undine shed silent but bitter tears, while the old folks wailed after her aloud. It seemed as if some foreboding were crossing

their minds, of how great their loss would prove.

The three travellers reached the deepest shades of the forest, without breaking silence. It was a fair sight to behold, as they passed through the leafy bowers: the graceful woman sitting on her noble steed, guarded on one side by the venerable Priest in the white habit of his order, on the other by the youthful Knight, with his gorgeous attire and glittering sword. Huldbrand had no eyes but for his precious wife; Undine, who had dried her duteous tears, no thought but for him; and they soon fell into a noiseless interchange of glances and signs, which at length was interrupted by the sound of a low murmur proceeding from the Priest and a fourth fellow-traveller who had joined them unobserved. He wore a white robe, very like the Priest's dress, except that the hood almost covered his face, and the rest of it floated round him in such large folds that he was perpetually obliged to gather it up, throw it over his arm, or otherwise arrange it; yet it did not seem to impede him at all in walking. When the young people saw him he was saying: "And so, my worthy father, I have dwelt in the forest for many a year, yet I am not what you commonly call a hermit. For, as I told you, I know nothing of penance, nor do I think it would do me much good. What makes me so fond of the woods is, that I have a very particular fancy for winding through the dark shades and forest walks, with my loose white clothes floating about me: now and then a pretty

sunbeam will glance over me as I go." "You seem to be a very curious person," replied the Priest, "and I should like to know more about you." "And pray who are you, to carry on the acquaintance?" said the stranger. "They call me Father Heilmann," answered the Priest, "and I belong to St. Mary's Monastery, beyond the lake." "Ay, ay!" rejoined the other. "My name is Kühleborn, and if I stood upon ceremony I might well call myself Lord of Kühleborn, or Baron (Freiherr) Kühleborn: for free I am, as the bird of the air, or a trifle more free. For instance I must now have a word with the young woman there." And before they could look round, he was on the other side of the Priest, close to Undine, and stretching up his tall figure to whisper in her ear. But she turned hastily away, saying: "I have nothing more to do with you now." "Heyday!" said the stranger, laughing, "what a prodigiously grand marriage yours must be, if you are to cast off your relations in this way. Have you forgotten Uncle Kühleborn, who brought you all the way here on his back so kindly?"

"But I entreat you," said Undine, "never come to me again. I am afraid of you now; and will not my husband become afraid of me, if he finds I have so strange a family?" "My little niece," said Kühleborn, "please to remember that I am protecting you all this time: the foul Spirits of Earth might play you troublesome tricks if I did not. So you had better let me go on with you, and no more words. The old Priest there has a better memory than

yours, for he would have it that he knew my face very well, and that I must have been with him in the boat when he fell into the water. And he may well say so, seeing that the wave which washed him over was none but myself, and I landed him safe on the shore in time for your wedding."

Undine and the Knight looked at Father Heilmann, but he seemed to be plodding on in a waking dream, and not listening to what was said. Undine said to Kühleborn: "There, I can see the end of the wood, we want your help no longer, and there is nothing to disturb us but you. So, in love and kindness I entreat you begone, and let us go in peace." This seemed to make Kühleborn angry: he twisted his face hideously, and hissed at Undine, who cried aloud for help. Like lightning the Knight passed round her horse, and aimed a blow at Kühleborn's head with his sword. But instead of the head he struck into a waterfall, which gushed foaming down a high cliff near them, and now showered them all with a splash that sounded like laughter and wetted them to the bone. The Priest seeming to wake up, said: "Well, I was expecting this, because that brook gushed down the rock so close to us. At first I could not shake off the idea that it was a man, and was speaking to me." The waterfall whispered distinctly in Huldbrand's ear: "Rash youth, dashing youth, I chide thee not, I shame thee not: still shield thy precious wife safe and sure, rash young soldier, dashing Knight!"

A little further on they emerged into the open

plains. The city lay glittering before them; and the evening sun that gilded her towers lent its grateful warmth to dry their soaked garments.

CHAPTER X.

Of their way of Life in the Town.

THE sudden disappearance of the young Knight Huldbrand of Ringstetten had made a great stir in the city and distressed the inhabitants, with whom his gallantry in the lists and the dance, and his gentle, courteous manners, had made him very popular. His retainers would not leave the place without their master, but yet none had the courage to seek him in the haunted forest. They, therefore, remained in their hostelry, idly hoping, as men are so apt to do, and keeping alive the remembrance of their lost lord by lamentations. But soon after, when the tempest raged, and the rivers overflowed, few doubted that the handsome stranger must have perished. Bertalda among others mourned him for lost, and was ready to curse herself for having urged him to the fatal ride through the forest. Her ducal foster parents had arrived to take her away, but she prevailed upon them to wait a little, in hope that a true report of Huldbrand's death or safety might reach them. She

tried to persuade some one of the young knights who contended for her favor to venture into the forest, and seek for the noble adventurer. But she would not offer her hand as the reward, because she still hoped to bestow it some day on the wanderer himself; and to obtain a glove, a scarf, or some such token from her, none of them cared to expose his life to bring back so dangerous a rival.

Now, when Huldbrand unexpectedly reappeared, it spread joy among his servants, and all the people generally, except Bertalda; for while the others were pleased at his bringing with him such a beautiful wife, and Father Heilmann to bear witness to their marriage, it could not but grieve *her*,—first, because the young Knight had really won her heart; and next because she had betrayed her feelings by so openly lamenting his absence far more than was now becoming. However, she behaved like a prudent woman, and suited her conduct to the circumstances by living in the most cordial intimacy with Undine, who passed in the town for a princess, released by Huldbrand from the power of some wicked enchanter of the forest. If she or her husband were questioned about it, they gave evasive answers. Father Heilmann's lips were sealed on all such idle topics, besides which he had left them soon after they arrived, and returned to his cloister. So the citizens were left to their own wondering conjectures, and even Bertalda came no nearer the truth than others.

Meanwhile, Undine grew daily more fond of

this winning damsel. "We must have known each other before," she would often say, "or else some secret attraction draws us towards each other; for without some cause — some strange, mysterious cause — I am sure nobody would love another as I have loved you from the moment we met. Bertalda, on her part, could not deny that she felt strongly inclined to like Undine, notwithstanding the grounds of complaint she thought she had against this happy rival. The affection being mutual, the one persuaded her parents, the other her wedded lord, to defer the day of departure repeatedly. They even went so far as to propose that Bertalda should accompany Undine to the castle of Ringstetten, near the source of the Danube.

They were talking of this one fine evening as they sauntered by starlight around the market-place, which was surrounded by high trees. The young couple had invited Bertalda to join their evening stroll, and they now paced backwards and forwards in pleasant talk, with the dark-blue sky over their heads, and a beautiful fountain before them in the centre, which, as it bubbled and sprang up into fanciful shapes, often caught their attention, and interrupted the conversation. All around them was serene and pleasant; through the foliage gleamed the light of many a lamp from the surrounding houses; and the ear was soothed by the hum of children at play, and of sauntering groups like themselves. They enjoyed at once the pleasure of solitude and the social happiness

of being near the cheerful haunts of men. Every little difficulty that had occurred to their favorite plan seemed to vanish upon nearer examination, and the three friends could not imagine that Bertalda's consent to the journey need be delayed a moment. But as she was on the point of naming a day for joining them and setting out, a very tall man came forwards from the middle of the place, bowed to them respectfully, and began whispering in Undine's ear. She, though apparently displeased with the interruption and with the speaker, stepped aside with him, and they began a low discourse together in what sounded like a foreign language. Huldbrand thought he knew this strange man's face, and fixed his attention upon him so earnestly that he neither heard nor answered the astonished Bertalda's questions. All at once, Undine clapped her hands joyfully, and turned her back laughing upon the stranger. He shook his head and walked off in an angry, hurried manner, and stepped into the fountain. This confirmed Huldbrand in his guess; while Bertalda inquired: "My dear Undine, what business had that man of the fountain with you?" Her friend smiled archly and replied: "On your birthday, the day after tomorrow, I will tell you, my sweet girl"; and she would say no more. She only pressed Bertalda to come and dine with them on that day, and bring her foster parents, after which they separated.

"Kühleborn?" said Huldbrand to his wife with a suppressed shudder, as they walked

home through the dark streets. "Yes, it was he," replied Undine; "and he tried to put all sorts of nonsense into my head. However, without intending it, he delighted me by one piece of news. If you wish to hear it now, my kind lord, you have but to say so, and I will tell you every word. But if you like to give your Undine a *very* great delight, you will wait two days, and then have your share in the surprise."

The Knight readily granted her what she had asked so meekly and gracefully; and as she dropped asleep she murmured: "How it will delight her! How little she expects such a message from the mysterious man,—dear, dear Bertalda!"

CHAPTER XI.

Bertalda's Birthday.

THE guests were now assembled at table: Bertalda sat at the top, adorned with flowers like the goddess of spring, and flashing with jewels, the gifts of many friends and relations. Undine and Huldbrand were on either side of her. When the sumptuous meal was ended and the dessert served, the doors were opened—according to the good old German custom—to let the common people look in and have their share in the gaiety of the rich. The attendants offered wine and cake to the assem-

bled crowd. Huldbrand and Bertalda were eagerly watching for the promised disclosure, and both kept their eyes fixed upon Undine. But she was still silent; her cheeks dimpled occasionally with a bright, conscious smile. Those that knew what she was about to do, could perceive that her interesting secret was ready to burst from her lips, but that she was playfully determined to keep it in, as children sometimes will save their daintiest morsels for the last. Her silent glee communicated itself to the other two, who watched impatiently for the happy news that was about to gladden their hearts. Some of the company now asked Undine for a song. She seemed to be prepared with one, and sent for her lute, to which she sang as follows: —

The sun gilds the wave,
The flowers are sweet,
And the ocean doth lave
The grass at our feet.

What lies on the earth
So blooming and gay?
Doth a blossom peep forth
And greet the new day?

Ah, 'tis a fair child!
She sports with the flowers,
So gladsome and mild,
Through the warm sunny hours.

O sweet one, who brought thee?
From far distant shore
Old Ocean he caught thee,
And many a league bore.

Poor babe, all in vain
Thou dost put forth thy hand,
None clasp it again,
'Tis a bleak foreign land:

The flowers bloom brightly
And soft breathes the air,
But all pass thee lightly,
Thy mother is far!

Thy life scarce begun,
Thy smiles fresh from Heaven,
Thy best treasure is gone,
To another 'tis given!

A gallant charger treads the dell,
His noble rider pities thee:
He takes thee home, he tends thee well
And cares for thee right gen'rously.

Well thou becom'st thy station high,
And bloom'st the fairest in the land:
And yet, alas, the purest joy
Is left on thine own distant strand.

Undine put down her lute with a melancholy smile; and the eyes of the Duke and Duchess filled with tears. "So it was when I found you, my poor innocent orphan!" said the Duke

with great emotion: as the fair singer said, your best treasure was gone, and we have been unable to supply its place."

"Now let us think of the poor parents," said Undine; and she struck the chords and sang:—

1.

Mother roams from room to room
Seeking rest she knows not how:
The house is silent as the tomb,
And who is there to bless her now?

2.

Silent house! oh words of sorrow!
Where is now her darling child?
She who should have cheered the morrow
And the evening hours beguiled?

3.

The buds are swelling on the tree,
The sun returns when night is o'er:
But mother, ne'er comes joy to thee,
Thy child shall bless thine eyes no more!

4.

And when the evening breezes blow
And father seeks his own fireside,
He smiles, forgetful of his woe,
But ah! his tears that smile shall hide.

5.

Father knows that in his home
Deathlike stillness dwells for aye:
The voice of mirth no more shall come,
And mother sighs the livelong day.

"Oh! Undine, for God's sake, where are my parents?" cried Bertalda, weeping. "Surely you know, you have discovered it, most wonderful woman: else how could you have stirred my inmost heart as you have done? They are perhaps even now in the room — can it be?" —and her eyes glanced over the gay assembly, and fixed upon a reigning Princess who sat next to the Duke. But Undine bent forward to the door, her eyes overflowing with the happiest tears. "Where are they, the poor anxious parents!" said she; and the old Fisherman and his wife came out from the crowd of bystanders. They turned an inquiring eye upon Undine, and then upon the handsome lady whom they were to call daughter. "There she is," faltered the delighted Undine, and the aged couple caught their long-lost child in their arms, thanking God, and weeping aloud.

Affrighted and enraged, Bertalda shrank from their embrace. It was more than her proud spirit could bear, to be thus degraded: at a moment, too, when she was fully expecting an increase of splendor, and fancy was showering pearls and diadems upon her head. She suspected that her rival had contrived this, on purpose to mortify her before Huldbrand and all the world. She reviled both Undine and the old people; the hateful words "treacherous creature! and bribed wretches!" burst from her lips. The old woman said in a half whisper: "Dear me, she has grown up a wicked woman, and yet my heart tells me she is my own child." The Fisherman had clasped his

hands and was praying silently that this girl might not prove to be theirs indeed. Undine, as pale as death, looked from Bertalda to the parents, from the parents to Bertalda, and could not recover the rude shock she had sustained, at being plunged from all her happy dreams into a state of fear and misery, such as she had never known before.

"Have you a soul? Have you indeed a soul, Bertalda?" she exclaimed once or twice, trying to recall her angry friend to reason, from what she took for a fit of madness, or a kind of nightmare. But Bertalda only stormed the louder; the repulsed parents wailed piteously; and the company began to dispute angrily and to side with one or the other, when Undine stepped forwards and asked with so much earnest gentleness to be listened to in her husband's house, that all was hushed in a moment. She took the place which Bertalda had left, at the head of the table, and as she stood there in modest dignity, the eyes of all turned towards her, and she said: "You all that cast such angry looks at each other and so cruelly spoil the joy of my poor feast, alas! I little knew what your foolish, angry passions were, and I think I shall never understand you. What I had hoped would do so much good has led to all this; but that is not my fault, it is your own doing, believe me. I have little more to say; but one thing you must hear, I have told no falsehood. Proofs I have none to give, beyond my word, but I will swear to the truth of it. I heard it from him who decoyed Ber-

talda from her parents into the water, and then laid her down in the meadow where the Duke was to pass."

"She is a sorceress:" cried Bertalda, "a witch who has dealings with evil spirits! she has acknowledged it."

"I have not," said Undine, with a heaven of innocence and guilelessness in her eyes. "Nor am I a witch,—only look at me!"

"Then she lies," cried Bertalda, "and she dares not assert that I was born of these mean people. My noble parents, I beseech you to take me out of this room and this town, where they are leagued together to insult me."

But the venerable Duke stood still, and his lady said: "We must first sift this matter to the bottom. Nothing shall make me leave the room till my doubts are satisfied."

Then the old woman came up, made a deep obeisance to the Duchess, and said: "You give me courage to speak, my noble, worthy Lady. I must tell you, that if this ungodly young woman is my daughter, I shall know her by a violet mark between her shoulders and another on the left instep. If she would but come with me into another room—"

"I will not uncover myself before that country woman," said Bertalda, proudly turning away.

"But before me you will," rejoined the Duchess, gravely. "You shall go with me into that room, young woman, and the good dame will accompany us." They withdrew together, leaving the party in silent suspense.

In a few minutes they came back; Bertalda was deadly pale, and the Duchess said: "Truth is truth, and I am bound to declare that our lady hostess has told us perfectly right. Bertalda is the Fisherman's daughter; more than that it concerns nobody to know." And the princely pair departed, taking with them their adopted child, and followed (upon a sign from the Duke) by the Fisherman and his wife. The rest of the assembly broke up, in silence or with secret murmurs, and Undine sank into Huldbrand's arms, weeping bitterly.

CHAPTER XII.

How they left the Imperial City.

THERE was certainly much to displease the Lord of Ringstetten in the events of this day: yet he could not look back upon them without feeling proud of the guileless truth and the generosity of heart shown by his lovely wife. "If indeed her soul was my gift," thought he, "it is nevertheless much better than my own"; and he devoted himself to the task of soothing her grief, and determined he would take her away the next morning from a spot now so full of bitter recollections.

They were mistaken, however, in thinking that she had lost in the eyes of the world by

this adventure. So prepared were the minds of people to find something mysterious in her, that her strange discovery of Bertalda's origin scarcely surprised them; while, on the other hand, every one that heard of Bertalda's history and of her passionate behavior, was moved with indignation. Of this, the Knight and Undine were not aware; nor would it have given them any comfort, for she was still as jealous of Bertalda's good name as of her own. Upon the whole, they had no greater wish than to leave the town without delay.

At day-break next morning, Undine's chariot was in readiness at the door, and the steeds of Huldbrand and his squires stood around it, pawing the ground with impatience. As the Knight led his fair bride to the door, a fishing girl accosted them: "We want no fish," said Huldbrand, "we are just going away." The girl began to sob bitterly, and they then recognized her as Bertalda. They immediately turned back into the house with her; and she said that the Duke and Duchess had been so incensed at her violence the day before, as to withdraw their protection from her, though not without giving her a handsome allowance. The Fisherman, too, had received a liberal gift, and had departed that evening with his wife, to return to the promontory. "I would have gone with them," she continued, "but the old Fisherman, whom they call my father"—

"And so he is, Bertalda," interrupted Undine. "He is your father. For the man you saw at the fountain told me how it is. He was trying

to persuade me that I had better not take you to Ringstetten, and he let drop the secret."

"Well, then," said Bertalda, "my father—if so it must be—my father said, 'You shall not live with us till you are an altered creature. Take courage, and come across the haunted forest to us,—that will show that you sincerely wish to belong to your parents. But do not come in your finery,—be like what you are, a fisherman's daughter.' And I will do as he bids me; for the whole world has forsaken me, and I have nothing left but to live and die humbly in a poor hut, alone with my lowly parents. I do dread the forest very much. They say it is full of grim spectres; and I am so timid! But what can I do? I came only to implore the Lady of Ringstetten's pardon for my rude language yesterday. I have no doubt you meant what you did kindly, noble Dame; but you little knew what a trial your words would be to me, and I was so alarmed and bewildered that many a hasty, wicked word escaped my lips. Ah forgive me, forgive me! I am unhappy enough already. Only consider what I was yesterday morning, even at the beginning of your feast, and what I am now."

Her words were lost in a flood of bitter tears, and Undine, equally affected, fell weeping on her neck. It was long before her emotion would let her speak. At length she said: "You shall go to Ringstetten with us: all shall be as we had settled it before; only call me Undine again, and not 'Lady' and noble 'Dame.' You see, we began by being exchanged in our cra-

dles. Our lives have been linked from that hour; and we will try to bind them so closely that no human power shall sever us. Come with us to Ringstetten, and all will be well. We will live like sisters there; trust me for arranging that." Bertalda looked timidly at Huldbrand. The sight of this beautiful, forsaken maiden affected him. He gave her his hand, and encouraged her kindly to trust herself to him and his wife. "As to your parents," said he, "we will let them know why you do not appear"; and he would have said much more concerning the good old folks, but he observed that Bertalda shuddered at the mention of them, and therefore dropped the subject. He gave her his arm, placed first her and then Undine in the carriage, and rode cheerfully after them. He urged the drivers on so effectually that they very soon found themselves out of sight of the city, and beyond the reach of sad recollections; and the two ladies could fully enjoy the beautiful country through which the road wound along.

After a few days' travelling, they arrived one sunny evening at the Castle of Ringstetten. Its young lord had much business with his steward and laborers to occupy him, so that Undine was left alone with Bertalda. They took a walk on the high ramparts of the castle, and admired the rich Swabian landscape, which lay far and wide around them. A tall man suddenly came up with a courteous obeisance; and Bertalda could not help thinking him very like the ominous man of the fountain. The like-

ness struck her still more when, upon an impatient and even menacing gesture of Undine's, he went away with the same hasty step and shake of the head as before. "Do not be afraid, dear Bertalda," said Undine; "the ugly man shall not harm you this time": after which she told her whole history, beginning from her birth, and how they had been exchanged in their earliest childhood. At first her friend looked at her with serious alarm. She thought that Undine was possessed by some delirium. But she became convinced it was all true as she listened to the well-connected narrative, which accounted so well for the strange events of the last months; besides which, there is something in genuine truth which finds an answer in every heart, and can hardly be mistaken. She was bewildered when she found herself one of the actors in a living fairy tale, and as wild a tale as any she had read. She gazed upon Undine with reverence, but could not help feeling a chill thrown over her affection for her; and that evening, at supper time, she wondered at the Knight's fond love and familiarity towards a being whom she now looked upon as rather a spirit than a human creature.

CHAPTER XIII.

How they lived in the Castle of Ringstetten.

AS he who relates this tale is moved to the heart by it, and hopes that it may affect his readers too, he entreats of them one favor, namely, that they will bear with him while he passes rapidly over a long space of time, and be content if he barely touches upon what happened therein. He knows well that some would relate in great detail, step by step, how Huldbrand's heart began to be estranged from Undine and drawn towards Bertalda, while she cared not to disguise from him her ardent love, and how between them the poor injured wife came to be rather feared than pitied; and when he showed her kindness, a cold shiver would often creep over him, and send him back to the child of earth, Bertalda; — all this, the author knows, might be dwelt upon; nay, perhaps it ought so to be. But his heart shrinks from such a task, for he has met with such passages in real life, and cannot even abide their shadows in his memory. Perhaps, gentle reader, such feelings are known to thee also, for they are the common lot of mortal man. Well is thee if thou hast felt, not inflicted, these pangs. In these cases it is more blessed to receive than to give. As such recollections

wake up from their cells, they will but cast a soft shade over the past; and it may be the thought of thy withered blossoms, once so fondly loved, brings a gentle tear down thy cheek. Enough of this; we will not go on to pierce our hearts with a thousand separate arrows, but content ourselves with saying that so it happened in the present instance.

Poor Undine drooped day by day, and the others were neither of them happy; Bertalda especially was uneasy, and ready to suspect the injured wife whenever she fancied herself slighted by Huldbrand. Meantime she had gradually assumed the command in the house, and the deluded Huldbrand supported her openly. Undine looked on, in meek resignation. To increase the discomfort of their lives, there was no end to the mysterious sights and sounds that haunted Huldbrand and Bertalda in the vaulted galleries of the castle, such as had never been heard of before. The long white man, too well known to him as uncle Kühleborn and to her as the spirit of the fountain, often showed his threatening countenance to both; but chiefly to Bertalda, who had more than once been made ill by the fright, and thought seriously of leaving the castle. But her love for Huldbrand detained her, and she quieted her conscience by thinking that it had never come to a declaration of love between them; and besides, she would not have known which way to turn. After receiving the Lord of Ringstetten's message that Bertalda was with them, the old Fisherman had traced a few

lines, scarcely legible, from infirmity and long disuse, saying: "I am now a poor old widower, for my dear good wife is dead. But, lonely as I am by my fireside, I had rather Bertalda stayed away than came here. Provided she does not harm my dear Undine! My curse be upon her if she does." Bertalda scattered these last words to the winds, but treasured up her father's command that she should not join him, as is the way with us selfish beings.

One day, when Huldbrand had just ridden out, Undine sent for her servants and desired them to fetch a large stone and carefully to stop up the mouth of the magnificent fountain which played in the centre of the court. The men objected that they must then always go down the valley to a great distance for water. Undine smiled mournfully. "It grieves me to add to your burdens, my good friends," said she; "I had rather go and fill my pitcher myself; but this fountain must be sealed up. Trust me, nothing else will do, and it is our only way of escaping a much worse evil."

The servants rejoiced at any opportunity of pleasing their gentle mistress. Not a word more was said, and they lifted the huge stone. They had raised it, and were about to let it down on the mouth of the spring, when Bertalda ran up calling out to them to stop. The water of this fountain was the best for her complexion, and she never would consent to its being stopped. But Undine, instead of yielding, as usual, kept firmly, though gently, to her resolution. She said that it behoved

her as mistress of the house to order all such matters as appeared best to her, and none but her lord and husband should call her to account. "Look, oh look!" cried Bertalda, eagerly and angrily, "how the poor bright water curls and writhes because you would deprive it of every gleam of sunshine, and of the cheerful faces of men, whose mirror it was created to be!" In truth, the spring did writhe and bubble up wonderfully, just as if some one were trying to force his way through; but Undine pressed them the more to dispatch the work. Nor was there much need to repeat her commands. The household people were too glad at once to obey their gentle lady and to mortify the pride of Bertalda, in spite of whose threats and wrath, the stone was soon firmly fastened down on the mouth of the spring. Undine bent over it thoughtfully, and wrote on its surface with her delicate fingers. Something very hard and sharp must have been hidden in her hand; for when she walked away, and the others came up, they found all manner of strange characters on the stone, none of which were there before.

When the Knight came home that evening, Bertalda received him with tears and complaints of Undine. He looked sternly at his poor wife, who mournfully cast down her eyes, saying, however, with firmness: "My lord and husband would not chide the meanest of his vassals without giving him a hearing, much less his wedded wife." "Speak, then; what was your reason for this strange proceeding?"

Undine emerging from the fountain.

said the Knight with a frown. "I would rather tell it you quite alone," sighed Undine. "You can say it just as well in Bertalda's presence," replied he. "Yes, if thou requirest it," said Undine; "but require it not." She looked so humble and so submissive in her touching beauty that the Knight's heart was melted, as by a sunbeam from happier days. He took her affectionately by the hand and led her to his own room, where she spoke to him as follows.

"You know that wicked uncle Kühleborn, my dearest lord, and have often been provoked at meeting him about the castle. Bertalda, too, has been often terrified by him. No wonder; he is soulless, shallow, and unthinking as a mirror, in whom no feeling can pierce the surface. He has two or three times seen that you were displeased with me, that I in my childishness could not help weeping, and that Bertalda might chance to laugh at the same moment. And upon this he builds all manner of unjust suspicions, and interferes, unasked, in our concerns. What is the use of my reproaching him, or repulsing him with angry words? He believes nothing that I say. A poor cold life is his! How should he know that the sorrows and the joys of love are so sweetly alike, so closely linked, that it is not in human power to part them? When a tear gushes out, a smile lies beneath; and a smile will draw the tears from their secret cells."

She smiled through her tears in Huldbrand's face, and a warm ray of his former love shot through his heart. She perceived this, pressed

closer to him, and with a few tears of joy she went on.

"As I found it impossible to get rid of our tormentor by words, I had nothing for it but to shut the door against him. And his only access to us was that fountain. He has quarrelled with the other fountain spirits in the surrounding valleys, and it is much lower down the Danube, below the junction of some of his friends with the great river, that his power begins again. Therefore I stopped the mouth of our fountain, and inscribed the stone with characters that cripple the might of my restless uncle; so that he can no longer cross your path, or mine, or Bertalda's. Men can indeed lift the stone off as easily as ever. The inscription has no power over them. So you are free to comply with Bertalda's wish; but indeed she little knows what she asks. Against her the wild Kühleborn has a most particular spite, and if some of his forebodings were to come true (as they might, without her intending any harm), oh, dearest, even thou wert not free from danger!"

Huldbrand deeply felt the generosity of his noble-minded wife in so zealously shutting out her formidable protector, even when reviled by Bertalda for so doing. He clasped her fondly in his arms, and said with much emotion: "The stone shall remain; and everything shall be done as thou wishest, now and hereafter, my sweetest Undine."

Scarce could she trust these words of love, after so dreary an estrangement. She returned

his caresses with joyful but timid gratitude, and at length said: "My own dear love, as you are so exceedingly kind to me today, may I ask you to promise one thing? Herein you are like the summer. Is he not most glorious when he decks his brows with thunders, and frowns upon us from his throne of clouds? So it is when your eyes flash lightning. It becomes you well; although in my weakness I may often shed a tear at it. Only, if you would promise to refrain from it when we are sailing, or even near any water. For there, you see, my relations have a right to control me. They might relentlessly tear me from you in their wrath, fancying there is an insult offered to one of their race; and I should be doomed to spend the rest of my life in the crystal palaces below, without ever coming to you; or, if they did send me up again,—oh, Heaven, that would be far worse! No, no, my best beloved, you will not let it come to that, if you love your poor Undine."

He solemnly promised to do as she asked him, and they returned to the saloon, quite restored to comfort and peace. They met Bertalda, followed by a few laborers whom she had sent for, and she said in a tone of bitterness that had grown common with her of late, "So, now your private consultation is over, and we may have the stone taken up. Make haste, you people, and do it for me." But Huldbrand, incensed at her arrogance, said shortly and decidedly: "The stone shall not be touched"; and he then reproved Bertalda

for her rudeness to his wife; upon which the laborers walked off, exulting secretly, while Bertalda hurried away to her chamber, pale and disturbed.

The hour of supper came, and they waited in vain for Bertalda. A message was sent to her. The servants found her room empty, and brought back only a sealed letter directed to the Knight. He opened it with trepidation and read: "I feel with shame that I am only a fisherman's daughter. Having forgotten it a moment, I will expiate my crime in the wretched hut of my parents. Live happy with your beautiful wife!"

Undine was sincerely grieved. She entreated Huldbrand to pursue their friend at once, and bring her back with him. Alas! there was little need of entreaty. His passion for Bertalda returned with fresh violence. He searched the castle all over, asking every one if they could tell him in what direction the fair one had fled. He could discover nothing; and now he had mounted his horse in the court, and stood ready to set forth and try the route by which he had brought Bertalda to the castle. A peasant boy just then came up, saying that he had met the Lady riding towards the Black Valley. Like a shot the Knight darted through the gate and took that direction, without heeding Undine's anxious cries from a window: "To the Black Valley? — oh, not there, Huldbrand! not there! or take me with you, for God's sake!" Finding it vain to cry, she had

her white palfrey saddled in all haste, and galloped after her husband, without allowing any one to attend her.

CHAPTER XIV.

How Bertalda drove home with the Knight.

THE Black Valley lay among the deepest recesses of the mountains. What it is called now none can tell. In those times it bore that name among the countrymen, on account of the deep gloom shed over it by many high trees, mostly pines. Even the brook which gushed down between the cliffs was tinged with black and never sparkled like the merry streams from which nothing intercepts the blue of heaven. Now, in the dusk of twilight, it looked darker still as it gurgled between the rocks. The Knight spurred his horse along its banks, now fearing to lose ground in his pursuit, and now again that he might overlook the fugitive in her hiding-place if he hurried past too swiftly. He presently found himself far advanced in the valley, and hoped he must soon overtake her if he were but in the right track. Then again, the thought that it might be a wrong one, roused the keenest anxiety in his breast. Where was the tender Bertalda to lay her head if he missed her in this bleak stormy night, which was setting in, black and

awful, upon the valley? And now he saw something white gleaming through the boughs on the slope of the mountain; he took it for Bertalda's robe, and made for it. But the horse started back, and reared so obstinately that Huldbrand, impatient of delay, and having already found him difficult to manage among the brambles of the thicket, dismounted, and fastened the foaming steed to a tree: he then felt his way through the bushes on foot. The boughs splashed his head and cheeks roughly with cold wet dew; far off he heard the growl of thunder beyond the mountains, and the whole strange scene had such an effect upon him that he became afraid of approaching the white figure which he now saw lying on the ground at a short distance. And yet he could distinguish it to be a woman, dressed in long white garments like Bertalda's, asleep or in a swoon. He came close to her, made the boughs rustle, and his sword ring; but she stirred not. "Bertalda!" cried he, first gently, then louder and louder, — in vain. When at length he shouted the beloved name with the whole strength of his lungs, a faint mocking echo returned it from the cavities of the rocks — Bertalda! but the sleeper awoke not. He bent over her, but the gloom of the valley and the shades of night prevented his discerning her features. At length, though kept back by some boding fears, he knelt down by her on the earth, and just then a flash of lightning lighted up the valley. He saw a hideous distorted face close to his own, and heard a hollow voice say:

"Give me a kiss, thou sweet shepherd!" With a cry of horror Huldbrand started up, and the monster after him. "Go home!" it cried, "the bad spirits are abroad; go home! or I have you!" and its long white arm nearly grasped him. Spiteful Kühleborn!" cried the Knight, taking courage; "what matters it, I know thee, foul spirit! there is a kiss for thee!" And he raised his sword furiously against the figure. But it dissolved, and a drenching shower made it sufficiently clear to the Knight what enemy he had encountered. "He would scare me away from Bertalda," said he aloud to himself; "he thinks he can subdue me by his absurd tricks, and make me leave the poor terrified maiden in his power, that he may wreak his vengeance upon her. But *that* he never shall — wretched goblin! What power lies in a human breast, when steeled by firm resolve, the contemptible juggler has yet to learn." And he felt the truth of his own words, and seemed to have nerved himself afresh by them. He thought, too, that fortune now began to aid him, for before he had got back to his horse again, he distinctly heard the piteous voice of Bertalda as if near at hand, borne towards him on the winds as their howling mingled with the thunder. Eagerly did he push on in that direction, and he found the trembling damsel, who was just attempting to climb the mountain's side, in order at any risk to get out of these awful shades.

He met her affectionately, and however proudly she might before have determined to

hold out, she could not but rejoice at being rescued by her much loved Huldbrand from the fearful solitude, and warmly invited to return to his cheerful home in the castle. She accompanied him with scarcely a word of reluctance, but was so exhausted that the Knight felt much relieved when they had reached the horse in safety. He hastened to loose him, and would have placed his tender charge upon him, and walked by her side to guide her carefully through the dangerous shades. But Kühleborn's mad pranks had driven the horse quite wild. Hardly could the Knight himself have sprung upon the terrified, plunging creature's back. To place the trembling Bertalda upon him was quite impossible; so they made up their minds to walk home. With his horse's bridle over one arm, Huldbrand supported his half fainting companion on the other. Bertalda mustered what strength she could, in order the sooner to get beyond this dreaded valley, but fatigue weighed her down like lead, and every limb shook under her,—partly from the recollection of all she had already suffered from Kühleborn's spite, and partly from terror at the continued crashing of the tempest through the mountain forests.

At length she slid down from her protector's arm, and sinking on the moss she said: "Leave me to die here, noble Huldbrand; I reap the punishment of my folly, and must sink under this load of fatigue and anguish." "Never, my precious friend, never will I forsake you," cried Huldbrand, vainly striving to curb his

raging steed, who was now beginning to start and plunge worse than ever. The Knight contrived to keep him at some distance from the exhausted maiden, so as to save her the terror of seeing him near her. But no sooner had he withdrawn himself and the wild animal a few steps, than she began to call him back in the most piteous manner, thinking he was indeed going to desert her in this horrible wilderness. He was quite at a loss what to do; gladly would he have let the horse gallop away in the darkness and expend his wild fury but that he feared he might rush down upon the very spot where Bertalda lay.

In this extremity of distress it gave him unspeakable comfort to descry a wagon slowly descending the stony road behind him. He called out for help; a man's voice replied telling him to have patience, but promising to come to his aid. Soon two white horses became visible through the thicket, and next the white smock-frock of the wagoner, and a large sheet of white linen that covered his goods inside. "Ho, stop!" cried the man, and the obedient horses stood still. "I see well enough," said he, "what ails the beast. When first I came through these parts my horses were just as troublesome; because there is a wicked water sprite living hard by who takes delight in making them play tricks. But I know a charm for this. If you will give me leave to whisper it in your horse's ear, you will see him as quiet as mine yonder in a moment." "Try your charm, if it will do any good!" said the impa-

tient Knight. The driver pulled the unruly horse's head towards him, and whispered a couple of words in his ear. At once the animal stood still, tamed and pacified, and showed no remains of his former fury but by panting and snorting, as if he still chafed inwardly. This was no time for Huldbrand to inquire how it had been done. He agreed with the wagoner that Bertalda should be taken into the wagon, which by his account was loaded with bales of soft cotton, and conveyed to the Castle of Ringstetten, while the Knight followed on horseback. But his horse seemed too much spent by his former violence to be able to carry his master so far, and the man persuaded Huldbrand to get into the wagon with Bertalda. The horse was to be fastened behind. "We shall go down hill," said the man, "and that is light work for my horses." The Knight placed himself by Bertalda: his horse quietly followed them, and the driver walked by steadily and carefully.

In the deep stillness of night, while the storm growled more and more distant, and in the consciousness of safety and easy progress, Huldbrand and Bertalda insensibly got into confidential discourse. He tenderly reproached her for having so hastily fled. She excused herself with bashful emotion, and through all she said it appeared most clearly that her heart was all his own. Huldbrand was too much engrossed by the expression of her words to attend to their apparent meaning, and he only replied to the former. Upon this the wagoner

cried out in a voice that rent the air: "Now, my horses, up with you; show us what you are made of, my fine fellows!" The Knight put out his head, and saw the horses treading, or rather swimming, through the foaming waters, while the wheels whirled loudly and rapidly like those of a water-mill, and the wagoner was standing upon the top of his wagon overlooking the floods. "Why, what road is this? It will take us into the middle of the stream," cried Huldbrand. "No, Sir," cried the driver, laughing; "it is just the other way. The stream is come into the middle of the road. Look around, and see how it is all flooded."

In fact, the whole valley was now heaving with waves, that had swollen rapidly to a great height. "This must be Kuhleborn, the wicked sprite, trying to drown us!" cried the Knight. "Have you no charm to keep him off, friend?" "I do know of one," said the driver, "but I can't and won't make use of it till you know who I am." "Is this a time for riddles?" shouted the Knight. "The flood is rising every moment, and what care I to know who you are?" "It rather concerns you, however, to know," said the driver, "for I am Kühleborn." And he grinned hideously into the wagon,—which was now a wagon no longer, nor were the horses horses; but all dissolved into foaming waves. The wagoner himself shot up into a giant waterspout, bore down the struggling horses into the flood, and, towering over the heads of the hapless pair, till he had

swelled into a watery mountain, he would have swallowed them up the next moment.

But now the sweet voice of Undine was heard above the wild uproar. The moon shone out between the clouds; and at the same instant Undine came into sight upon the high grounds above them. She addressed Kühleborn in a commanding tone; the huge wave laid itself down, muttering and murmuring; the waters rippled gently away in the moon's soft light; and Undine alighted like a white dove from her airy height, and led them to a soft green spot on the hill side, where she refreshed their jaded spirits with choice food. She then helped Bertalda to mount her own white palfrey, and at length they all three reached the Castle of Ringstetten in safety.

CHAPTER XV.

The Trip to Vienna.

FOR some time after this adventure they led a quiet and peaceful life in the castle. The Knight was deeply touched by his wife's angelic goodness, so signally displayed by her pursuing and saving them in the Black Valley, where their lives were threatened by Kühleborn. Undine herself was happy in the peace of an approving conscience; besides that, many a gleam of hope now brightened her path, as her hus-

band's love and confidence seemed to revive. Bertalda meanwhile was grateful, modest, and timid, without claiming any merit for being so. If either of her companions alluded to the sealing up of the fountain, or the adventures in the Black Valley, she would implore them to spare her on those subjects, because she could not think of the fountain without a blush, nor the valley without a shudder. She was therefore told nothing further,—indeed what would have been the use of enlightening her? Nothing could add to the peace and happiness which had taken up their abode in the Castle of Ringstetten. They enjoyed the present in full security, and the future lay before them all blooming with fair fruits and flowers.

The winter had gone by without any interruption to their social comfort; and spring, with her young green shoots and bright blue skies, began to smile upon men. Their hearts felt light, like the young season; and from its returning birds of passage they caught a fancy to travel. One day, as they were walking together near the sources of the Danube, Huldbrand fell into talk about the glories of that noble river, how proudly he flowed on through fruitful lands to the spot where the majestic city of Vienna crowned his banks, and how every mile of his course was marked by fresh grandeur and beauty. "How delightful it would be to follow his course down to Vienna?" cried Bertalda; but instantly relapsing into her timid, chastened manner, she blushed and was silent. This touched Undine, and in her

eagerness to give her friend pleasure, she said: "And why should not we take the trip?" Bertalda jumped for joy, and their fancy began to paint this pleasant recreation in the brightest colors. Huldbrand encouraged them cheerfully, but whispered once to Undine: "But, should not we get within Kühleborn's power again down there?" "Let him come," said she laughing; "I shall be with you, and in my presence he durst not attempt any mischief."

So the only possible objection seemed removed, and they prepared for departure, and were soon sailing along, full of spirit and of gay hopes. But, O Man! it is not for thee to wonder when the course of events differs widely from the paintings of thy fancy. The treacherous foe that lures us to our ruin lulls his victim to rest with sweet music and golden dreams. Our guardian angel, on the contrary, will often rouse us by a sharp and awakening blow.

The first days they spent on the Danube were days of extraordinary enjoyment. The further they floated down the proud stream, the nobler and fairer grew the prospect. But, just as they had reached a most lovely district, the first sight of which had promised them great delight, the unruly Kühleborn began openly to give signs of his presence and power. At first they were only sportive tricks, because, whenever he ruffled the stream and raised the wind, Undine repressed him by a word or two, and made him subside at once; but his attempts soon began again, and Undine was obliged to

warn him off, so that the pleasure of the little party was grievously disturbed. To make things worse, the watermen would mutter many a dark surmise into each other's ears, and cast strange looks at the three gentlefolks, whose very servants began to feel suspicious, and to show distrust of their lord. Huldbrand said to himself more than once: "This comes of uniting with other than one's like. A son of earth may not marry a wondrous maid of ocean." To justify himself (as we all love to do), he would add: "But I did not know she was a maid of ocean. If I am to be pursued and fettered wherever I go by the mad freaks of her relations, mine is the misfortune, not the fault." Such reflections somewhat checked his self reproaches; but they made him the more disposed to accuse, nay, even to hate Undine. Already he began to scowl upon her, and the poor wife understood but too well his meaning. Exhausted by this, and by her constant exertions against Kühleborn, she sank back one evening in the boat, and was lulled by its gentle motion into a deep sleep.

But no sooner were her eyes closed than every one in the boat thought he saw, just opposite his own eyes, a terrific human head rising above the water,—not like the head of a swimmer, but planted upright on the surface of the river, and keeping pace with the boat. Each turned to his neighbor to show him the cause of his terror, and found him looking equally frightened, but pointing in a different

direction, where the half-laughing, half-scowling goblin met his eyes. When at length they tried to explain the matter to each other, crying out: "Look there! no, there!" each of them suddenly perceived the other's phantom, and the water around the boat appeared all alive with ghastly monsters. The cry which burst from every mouth awakened Undine. Before the light of her beaming eyes, the horde of misshapen faces vanished. But Huldbrand was quite exasperated by these fiendish tricks, and would have burst into loud imprecations had not Undine whispered in the most beseeching manner: "For God's sake, my own lord, be patient now! Remember we are on the water." The Knight kept down his anger, and soon sank into thought. Presently Undine whispered to him: "My love, had not we better give up the foolish journey, and go home to Ringstetten in comfort?" But Huldbrand muttered angrily: "Then I am to be kept a prisoner in my own castle? and even there I may not breathe freely unless the fountain is sealed up? Would to Heaven the absurd connection"—but Undine pressed her soft hand gently upon his lips; and he held his peace, and mused upon all she had previously told him.

In the mean time Bertalda had yielded herself up to many and strange reflections. She knew something of Undine's origin, but not all; and Kühleborn in particular was only a fearful but vague image in her mind; she had not even once heard his name. And as she

pondered these wonderful subjects, she half unconsciously took off a golden necklace which Huldbrand had bought for her of a travelling jeweller a few days before; she held it close to the surface of the river playing with it, and dreamily watching the golden gleam that it shed on the glassy water. Suddenly a large hand came up out of the Danube, snatched the necklace and ducked under with it. Bertalda screamed aloud, and was answered by a laugh of scorn from the depths below. And now the Knight could contain himself no longer. Starting up he gave a loose to his fury, loading with imprecations those who chose to break into his family and private life, and challenging them — were they goblins or sirens — to meet his good sword. Bertalda continued to weep over the loss of her beloved jewel, and her tears were as oil to the flames of his wrath; while Undine kept her hand dipped into the water, with a ceaseless low murmur, only once or twice interrupting her mysterious whispers to say to her husband in tones of entreaty: "Dearest love, speak not roughly to me here; say whatever you will, only spare me here, you know why; and he still restrained his tongue (which stammered with passion) from saying a word directly against her. She soon drew her hand from under the water, bringing up a beautiful coral necklace whose glitter dazzled them all. "Take it," said she, offering it kindly to Bertalda; "I have sent for this instead of the one you lost; do not grieve any more, my poor child." Huldbrand darted forwards, snatched

the shining gift from Undine's hand, hurled it again into the water and roared furiously: "So you still have intercourse with them? In the name of sorcery, go back to them with all your baubles, and leave us men in peace, witch as you are!" With eyes aghast, yet streaming with tears, poor Undine gazed at him, still holding out the hand which had so lovingly presented to Bertalda the bright jewel. Then she wept more and more, like a sorely injured, innocent child. And at length she said, faintly: "Farewell, my dearest, farewell! They shall not lay a finger on thee; only be true to me, that I may still guard thee from them. But I, alas! I must be gone; all this bright morning of life is over. Woe, woe is me! what hast thou done? woe, woe!" And she slipped out of the boat and passed away. Whether she went down into the river, or flowed away with it, none could tell; it was like both and yet like neither. She soon mingled with the waters of the Danube, and nothing was to be heard but the sobbing whispers of the stream as it washed against the boat, seeming to say distinctly, "Woe, woe! Oh be true to me! woe, woe!"

Huldbrand lay flat in the boat, drowned in tears, till a deep swoon came to the unhappy man's relief, and steeped him in oblivion.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of what befell Huldbrand afterwards.

SHALL we say alas, or thank God, that our grief is so often transient? I speak of such grief as has its source in the well-springs of life itself, and seems so identified with our lost friend as almost to fill up the void he has left! and his hallowed image seems fixed within the sanctuary of our soul, until the signal of our release comes, and sets us free to join him. In truth a good man will not suffer this sanctuary to be disturbed; yet even with him it is not the first the all-engrossing sorrow which abides. New objects will intermingle, and we are compelled to draw from our grief itself, a fresh proof of the perishableness of earthly things: alas, then, that our grief is transient!

So it was with the Lord of Ringstetten; whether for his weal or woe, the sequel of this story will show us. At first he could do nothing but weep abundantly, as his poor kind Undine had wept when he snatched from her the beautiful gift which she thought would have comforted and pleased them so much. He would then stretch out his hand as she had done, and burst into tears afresh, like her. He secretly hoped that he might end by altogether dissolving in tears: and are there not many whose

minds have been visited by the same painfully pleasing thought at some season of great sorrow? Bertalda wept with him, and they lived quietly together at Ringstetten a long while, cherishing the memory of Undine, and seeming to have forgotten their own previous attachment. Moreover, the gentle Undine often appeared to Huldbrand in his dreams; she would caress him meekly and fondly and depart again with tearful resignation, so that when he awoke he doubted whose tears they were that bedewed his face,— were they her's, or only his own?

But as time went on these visions became less frequent and the Knight's grief milder: still he might perhaps have spent the rest of his days contentedly, devoting himself to the memory of Undine, and keeping it alive by talking of her, had not the old Fisherman unexpectedly made his appearance and laid his serious commands upon Bertalda his daughter to return home with him. The news of Undine's disappearance had reached him, and he would no longer suffer Bertalda to remain in the castle alone with its lord. "I do not ask whether my daughter cares for me or not," said he; "her character is at stake, and where that is the case nothing else is worth considering."

This summons from the old man, and the prospect of utter loneliness amid the halls and long galleries of the castle after Bertalda's departure, revived in Huldbrand's heart the feeling that had lain dormant, and as it were buried under his mourning for Undine, namely,

his love for the fair Bertalda. The Fisherman had many objections to their marriage; Undine had been very dear to the old man, and he thought it hardly certain yet that his lost darling was really dead. But if her corpse were indeed lying stiff and cold in the bed of the Danube, or floating down its stream to the distant ocean, then Bertalda ought to reproach herself for her death, and it ill became her to take the place of her poor victim. However, the Fisherman was very fond of Huldbrand also; the entreaties of his daughter, who was now grown much more gentle and submissive, had their effect, and it seems that he did yield his consent at last, for he remained peaceably at the castle, and an express was sent to Father Heilmann, who in earlier, happier days had blessed Undine's and Huldbrand's union, that he might officiate at the Knight's second marriage.

No sooner had the holy man read the Lord of Ringstetten's letter than he set forth on his way thither with far greater speed than the messenger had used to reach him. If his straining haste took away his breath, or he felt his aged limbs ache with fatigue, he would say to himself: "I may be in time to prevent a wicked deed; sink not till thou hast reached the goal, my withered frame!" And so he exerted himself afresh, and pushed on, without flagging or halting, till late one evening he entered the shady court of Ringstetten.

The lovers were sitting hand in hand under a tree, with the thoughtful old man near them.

As soon as they saw Father Heilmann, they rose eagerly and advanced to meet him. But he, scarcely noticing their civilities, begged the Knight to come with him into the castle. As he stared at this request, and hesitated to comply, the pious old Priest said: "Why, indeed, should I speak to you alone, my Lord of Ringstetten? What I have to say equally concerns the Fisherman and Bertalda; and as they must sooner or later know it, it had better be said now. How can you be certain, Lord Huldbrand, that your own wife is indeed dead? For myself, I can hardly think so. I will not venture to speak of things relating to her wondrous nature,—in truth, I have no clear knowledge about it. But a godly and faithful wife she proved herself, beyond all doubt; and these fourteen nights has she come to my bedside in dreams, wringing her poor hands in anguish, and sighing out: 'Oh, stop him, dear Father! I am yet alive! Oh, save his life! Oh, save his soul!' I understood not the meaning of the vision till your messenger came; and I have now hastened thither, not to join but to part those hands, which may not be united in holy wedlock. Part from her, Huldbrand! Part from him, Bertalda! He belongs to another. See you not how his cheek turns pale at the thought of his departed wife? Those are not the looks of a bridegroom, and the spirit tells me this. If thou leavest him not now, there is joy for thee no more." They all three felt at the bottom of their hearts that Father Heilmann's words were true, but they

would not yield to them. Even the old Fisherman was so blinded as to think that what had been settled between them for so many days could not now be relinquished. So they resisted the Priest's warnings, and urged the fulfillment of their wishes with headlong, gloomy determination, till Father Heilmann departed with a melancholy shake of the head. without accepting even for one night their proffered hospitalities, or tasting any of the refreshments they set before him. But Huldbrand persuaded himself that the old Priest was a weak dotard; and early next morning he sent to a monk from the nearest cloister, who readily promised to come and marry them in a few days.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Knight's Dream.

THE morning twilight was beginning to dawn, and the Knight lay half awake on his couch. Whenever he dropped asleep, he was scared by mysterious terrors, and started up as if sleep were peopled by phantoms. If he woke up in earnest, he felt himself fanned all around by what seemed like swans' wings, and soothed by watery airs, which lulled him back again into the half unconscious, twilight state. At length he did fall asleep, and fancied

himself lifted by swans on their soft wings, and carried far away over lands and seas, all to the sound of their sweetest melody. "Swans singing! swans singing!" thought he continually: is not that the strain of Death?" Presently he found himself hovering above a vast sea. A swan warbled in his ear that it was the Mediterranean; and as he looked down into the deep, it became like clear crystal, transparent to the bottom. This rejoiced him much, for he could see Undine sitting in a brilliant hall of crystal.

She was shedding tears, indeed, and looked sadly changed since the happy times which they had spent together at Ringstetten,—happiest at first, but happy also a short time since, just before the fatal sail on the Danube. The contrast struck Huldbrand deeply; but Undine did not seem to be aware of his presence. Kühleborn soon came up to her, and began rating her for weeping. She composed herself, and looked at him with a firmness and dignity before which he almost quailed. "Though I am condemned to live under these deep waters," said she, "I have brought my soul with me; therefore my tears cannot be understood by thee. But to me they are blessings, like everything that belongs to a loving soul." He shook his head incredulously, and said after a pause: "Nevertheless, niece, you are still subject to the laws of our element; and you know you must execute sentence of death upon him as soon as he marries again, and breaks faith with you." "To this hour he is a widower, said

Undine, "and loves and mourns me truly." "Ah, but he will be a bridegroom soon," said Kühleborn with a sneer: "wait a couple of days only and the marriage blessing will have been given, and you must go up and put the criminal to death." "I cannot!" answered the smiling Undine. "I have had the fountain sealed up against myself and my whole race." "But suppose he leaves his castle," said Kühleborn, "or forgets himself so far as to let them set the fountain 'free'! for he thinks mighty little of those matters." "And that is why," said Undine, still smiling through her tears, "that is why his spirit hovers at this moment over the Mediterranean, and listens to our conversation as in a dream. I have contrived it on purpose, that he may take warning." On hearing this Kühleborn looked up angrily at the Knight, scowled at him, stamped, and then shot upwards through the waves like an arrow. His fury seemed to make him expand into a whale. Again the swans began to warble, to wave their wings, and to fly: the Knight felt himself borne high over alps and rivers till he was deposited in the Castle of Ringstetten, and awoke in his bed.

He did awake in his bed, just as one of his squires entered the room and told him that Father Heilmann was still lingering near the castle; for he had found him the evening before in the forest living in a shed he had made for himself with branches and moss. On being asked what he was staying for, since he had refused to bless the betrothed couple, he ans-

wered: "it is not the wedded only who stand in need of prayer; and though I came not for the bridal, there may yet be work for me of another kind. We must be prepared for everything. Sometimes marriage and mourning are not so far apart; and he who does not willfully close his eyes may perceive it." The Knight built all manner of strange conjectures upon these words and upon his dream. But if once a man has formed a settled purpose, it is hard indeed to shake it. The end of this was that their plans remained unchanged.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Knight Huldbrand's second Bridal.

WERE I to tell you how the wedding-day at Ringstetten passed, you might imagine yourself contemplating a glittering heap of gay objects with a black crape thrown over them, through which the splendid pageant, instead of delighting the eye, would look like a mockery of all earthly joys. Not that the festive meeting was disturbed by any spectral apparitions. We have seen that the castle was safe from any intrusion of the malicious water sprites. But the Knight, the Fisherman, and all the guests were haunted by a feeling that

the chief person, the soul of the feast, was missing; and who was she but the gentle, beloved Undine? As often as they heard a door open, every eye turned involuntarily towards it, and when nothing ensued but the entrance of the steward with some more dishes, or of the cup-bearer with a fresh supply of rich wine, the guests would look sad and blank, and the sparks of gaiety kindled by the light jest or the cheerful discourse were quenched in the damp of melancholy recollections. The bride was the most thoughtless, and consequently the most cheerful person present; but even she, at moments, felt it unnatural to be sitting at the head of the table, decked out in her wreath of green and her embroidery of gold, while Undine's corpse was lying cold and stiff in the bed of the Danube, or floating down its stream to the ocean. For, ever since her father had used these words, they had kept ringing in her ears, and today especially they pursued her without ceasing.

The party broke up before night had closed in, not, as usual, dispersed by the eager impatience of the bridegroom to be alone with his bride; but dropping off listlessly, as a general gloom spread over the assembly. Bertalda was followed to her dressing-room by her women only, and the Knight by his pages. At this gloomy feast there was no question of the gay and sportive train of bridemaids and young men who usually attend the wedded pair.

Bertalda tried to call up brighter thoughts; she bade her women display before her a splen-

did set of jewels, the gift of Huldbrand, together with her richest robes and veils, that she might select the gayest and handsomest dress for the morrow. Her maids seized the opportunity of wishing their young mistress all manner of joy, nor did they fail to extol the beauty of the bride to the skies. Bertalda, however, glanced at herself in the glass, and sighed: "Ah, but look at the freckles just here, on my throat!" They looked and found it was indeed so, but called them beauty spots that would only enhance the fairness of her delicate skin. Bertalda shook her head, and replied: "Still it is a blemish, and I once might have cured it!" said she with a deep sigh. "But the fountain in the court is stopped up; that fountain which used to supply me with precious beautifying water. If I could but get one jugful today!" "Is that all?" cried an obsequious attendant, and slipped out of the room. "Why, she will not be so mad," asked Bertalda, in a tone of complacent surprise, "as to make them raise the stone this very night?" And now she heard men's footsteps crossing the court; and on looking down from her window, she saw the officious handmaid conducting them straight to the fountain. They carried levers and other tools upon their shoulders. "Well, it is my will, to be sure," said Bertalda, smiling, "provided they are not too long about it." And, elated by the thought that a hint from her could now effect what had once been denied to her entreaties, she watched the progress of the work in the moonlit court below.

The men began straining themselves to lift the huge stone; occasionally a sigh was heard, as some one recollected that they were now reversing their dear lady's commands. But the task proved lighter than they had expected. Some power from beneath seemed to second their efforts, and help the stone upwards. "Why," said the astonished workmen to each other, "it feels as if the spring below had turned into a waterspout." More and more did the stone heave, till, without any impulse from the men, it rolled heavily along the pavement with a hollow sound. But from the mouth of the spring arose, slowly and solemnly, what looked like a column of water. At first they thought so, but presently saw that it was no waterspout, but the figure of a pale woman, veiled in white. She was weeping abundantly, wringing her hands and clasping them over her head, while she proceeded with slow and measured step towards the castle. The crowd of servants fell back from the spot, while, pale and aghast, the bride and her women looked on from the window.

When the figure had arrived just under that window, she raised her tearful face for a moment, and Bertalda thought she recognized Undine's pale features through the veil. The shadowy form moved on, slowly and reluctantly, like one sent to execution. Bertalda screamed out that the Knight must be called. No one durst stir a foot, and the bride herself kept silence, frightened at the sound of her own voice.

While these remained at the window, as if rooted to the spot, the mysterious visitor had entered the castle and passed up the well-known stairs, and through the familiar rooms, still weeping silently. Alas! how differently had she trodden those floors in days gone by!

The Knight had now dismissed his train. Half undressed, and in a dejected mood, he was standing near a large mirror, by the light of a dim taper. He heard the door tapped by a soft, soft touch. It was thus Undine had been wont to knock when she meant to steal upon him playfully. "It is all fancy!" thought he. "The bridal bed awaits me." "Yes, but it is a cold one," said a weeping voice from without; and the mirror then showed him the door opening slowly, and the white form coming in, and closing the door gently behind her. "They have opened the mouth of the spring," murmured she; "and now I am come, and now must thou die." His beating heart told him this was indeed true; but he pressed his hands over his eyes and said: "Do not bewilder me with terror in my last moments. If thy veil conceals the features of a spectre, hide them from me still, and let me die in peace." "Alas!" rejoined the forlorn one, "wilt thou not look upon me once again? I am fair as when thou didst woo me on the promontory." "Oh, could that be true!" sighed Huldbrand, "and if I might die in thy embrace!" "Be it so, my dearest," said she. And she raised her veil, and the heavenly radiance of her sweet countenance beamed upon him.

Trembling, at once with love and awe, the Knight approached her. She received him with a tender embrace, but instead of relaxing her hold, she pressed him more closely to her heart, and wept as if her soul would pour itself out. Drowned in her tears and his own, Huldbrand felt his heart sink within him, and at last he fell lifeless from the fond arms of Undine upon his pillow.

"I have wept him to death!" said she to the pages whom she passed in the ante-chamber; and she glided slowly through the crowd, and went back to the fountain.

CHAPTER XIX.

How the Knight Huldbrand was Interred.

FATHER Heilmann had returned to the castle as soon as he heard of the Lord of Ringstetten's death; and he appeared there just after the monk who had married the hapless pair had fled, full of alarm and horror. "It is well," answered Heilmann, when told this: "now is the time for my office: I want no assistant." He addressed spiritual exhortations to the widowed bride; but little impression could be made on so worldly and thoughtless a mind. The old Fisherman, although

grieved to the heart, resigned himself more readily to the awful dispensation; and when Bertalda kept calling Undine a witch and a murderer, the old man calmly answered: "The stroke could not be turned away. For my part, I see only the hand of God therein; and none grieved more deeply over Huldbrand's sentence than she who was doomed to inflict it,—the poor forsaken Undine!" And he helped to arrange the funeral ceremonies in a manner suitable to the high rank of the dead. He was to be buried in a neighboring hamlet, whose churchyard contained the graves of all his ancestors, and which he had himself enriched with many noble gifts. His helmet and coat of arms lay upon the coffin, about to be lowered into earth with his mortal remains,—for Lord Huldbrand of Ringstetten was the last of his race.

The mourners began their dismal procession, and the sound of their solemn dirge rose into the calm blue depths of heaven. Heilmann walked first, bearing on high a crucifix, and the bereaved Bertalda followed, leaning on her aged father. Suddenly, amid the crowd of mourners who composed the widow's train, appeared a snow white figure, deeply veiled, with hands uplifted in an attitude of intense grief. Those that stood near her felt a shudder creep over them: they shrank back, and thus increased the alarm of those whom the stranger next approached, so that confusion gradually spread itself through the whole train. Here and there was to be found a soldier bold

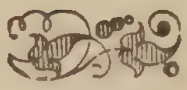
enough to address the figure and attempt to drive her away; but she always eluded their grasp, and the next moment reappeared among the rest, moving along with slow and solemn step. At length, when the attendants had all fallen back, she found herself close behind Bertalda, and now slackened her pace to the very slowest measure, so that the widow was not aware of her presence. No one disturbed her again, while she meekly and reverently glided on behind her.

So they advanced till they reached the churchyard, when the whole procession formed a circle around the open grave. Bertalda then discovered the unbidden guest, and half angry, half frightened, she forbade her to come near the Knight's resting-place. But the veiled form gently shook her head and extended her hands in humble entreaty; this gesture reminded Bertalda of poor Undine, when she gave her the coral necklace on the Danube, and she could not but weep. Father Heilmann enjoined silence, for they had begun to heap earth over the grave, and were about to offer up solemn prayers around it. Bertalda knelt down in silence, and all her followers did the same. When they arose, lo! the white form had vanished! and on the spot where she had knelt, a bright silvery brook now gushed out of the turf and flowed around the Knight's tomb, till it had almost wholly encircled it; then it ran further on, and emptied itself into a shady pool which bounded one side of the churchyard. From that time forth the villagers are

said to have shown travellers this clear spring, and they still believe it to be the poor forsaken Undine, who continues thus to twine her arms around her beloved lord.

SINTRAM

AND HIS COMPANIONS.



THE KNIGHT, DEATH, AND SATAN.

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SINTRAM AND HIS COMPANIONS.

CHAPTER I.

IN the high castle of Drontheim many knights sat assembled to hold council for the weal of the realm; and joyously they caroused together till midnight around the huge stone table in the vaulted hall. A rising storm drove the snow wildly against the rattling windows; all the oak doors groaned, the massive locks shook, the castle clock slowly and heavily struck the hour of one. Then a boy, pale as death, with disordered hair and closed eyes, rushed into the hall, uttering a wild scream of terror. He stopped beside the richly-carved seat of the mighty Biorn, clung to the glittering knight with both his hands, and shrieked in a piercing voice: "Knight and father! father and knight! Death and another are closely pursuing me!"

An awful stillness lay like ice on the whole assembly, save that the boy screamed ever the fearful words. But one of Biorn's numerous retainers, an old esquire, known by the name of Rolf the Good, advanced towards the ter-

rified child, took him in his arms, and half chanted this prayer: "O Father, help Thy servant! I believe, and yet I cannot believe." The boy, as if in a dream, at once loosened his hold of the knight; and the good Rolf bore him from the hall unresisting, yet still shedding hot tears and murmuring confused sounds.

The lords and knights looked at one another much amazed, until the mighty Biorn said, wildly and fiercely laughing: "Marvel not at that strange boy. He is my only son; and has been thus since he was five years old: he is now twelve. I am therefore accustomed to see him so; though, at the first, I too was disquieted by it. The attack comes upon him only once in the year, and always at this same time. But forgive me for having spent so many words on my poor Sintram, and let us pass on to some worthier subject for our discourse."

Again there was silence for a while; then, whisperingly and doubtfully, single voices strove to renew their broken-off discourse, but without success. Two of the youngest and most joyous began a roundelay; but the storm howled and raged so wildly without that this too was soon interrupted. And now they all sat silent and motionless in the lofty hall; the lamp flickered sadly under the vaulted roof; the whole party of knights looked like pale, lifeless images dressed up in gigantic armor.

Then arose the chaplain of the castle of Drontheim, the only priest among the knightly throng, and said: "Dear Lord Biorn, our eyes and thoughts have all been directed to you and

your son in a wonderful manner; but so it has been ordered by the providence of God. You perceive that we cannot withdraw them; and you would do well to tell us exactly what you know concerning the fearful state of the boy. Perchance the solemn tale, which I expect from you, might do good to this disturbed assembly."

Biorn cast a look of displeasure on the priest, and answered: "Sir chaplain, you have more share in the history than either you or I could desire. Excuse me if I am unwilling to trouble these light-hearted warriors with so rueful a tale."

But the chaplain approached nearer to the knight, and said in a firm yet very mild tone: "Dear lord, hitherto it rested with you alone to relate or not to relate it; but now that you have so strangely hinted at the share which I have had in your son's calamity, I must positively demand that you will repeat word for word how every thing came to pass. My honor will have it so; and that will weigh with you as much as with me."

In stern compliance Biorn bowed his haughty head, and began the following narration. "This time seven years I was keeping the Christmas feast with my assembled followers. We have many venerable old customs which have descended to us by inheritance from our great forefathers; as, for instance, that of placing a gilded boar's head on the table, and making thereon knightly vows of daring and wondrous deeds. Our chaplain here, who used then fre-

quently to visit me, was never a friend to keeping up such traditions of the ancient heathen world. Such men as he were not much in favor in those olden times."

"My excellent predecessors," interrupted the chaplain, "belonged more to God than to the world, and with Him they were in favor. Thus they converted your ancestors; and if I can in like manner be of service to you, even your jeering will not vex me."

With looks yet darker, and a somewhat angry shudder, the knight resumed: "Yes, yes; I know all your promises and threats of an invisible Power, and how they are meant to persuade us to part more readily with whatever of this world's goods we may possess. Once, ah, truly, once I too had such! Strange! Sometimes it seems to me as though ages had passed over since then, and as if I were alone the survivor, so fearfully is everything changed. But now I bethink me that the greater part of this noble company knew me in my happiness, and have seen my wife, my lovely Verena."

He pressed his hands on his eyes, and it seemed as though he wept. The storm had ceased; the soft light of the moon shone through the windows, and her beams played on his wild features. Suddenly he started up, so that his heavy armor rattled with a fearful sound, and he cried out in a thundering voice: "Shall I turn monk, as she has become a nun? No, crafty priest; your webs are too thin to catch flies of my sort."

"I have nothing to do with webs," said the

chaplain. "In all openness and sincerity have I put heaven and hell before you during the space of six years; and you gave full consent to the step which the holy Verena took. But what all that has to do with your son's sufferings I know not, and I wait for your narration."

"You may wait long enough," said Biorn, with a sneer. "Sooner shall——"

"Swear not!" said the chaplain in a loud commanding tone, and his eyes flashed almost fearfully.

"Hurra!" cried Biorn in wild affright; "hurra! Death and his companion are loose!" and he dashed madly out of the chamber and down the steps. The rough and fearful notes of his horn were heard summoning his retainers; and presently afterward the clatter of horses' feet on the frozen court yard gave token of their departure.

The knights retired, silent and shuddering, while the chaplain remained alone at the huge stone table, praying.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER some time the good Rolf returned with slow and soft steps, and started with surprise at finding the hall deserted. The chamber where he had been occupied in quieting and soothing the unhappy child was in so dis-

tant a part of the castle that he had heard nothing of the knight's hasty departure. The chaplain related to him all that had passed, and then said: "'But my good Rolf, I much wish to ask you concerning those strange words with which you seemed to lull poor Sintram to rest. They sounded like sacred words, and no doubt they are, but I could not understand them. 'I believe, and yet I cannot believe.'"

"Reverend sir," answered Rolf, "I remember that from my earliest years no history in the Gospels has taken such hold of me as that of the child possessed with a devil, which the disciples were not able to cast out; but when our Saviour came down from the mountain where He had been transfigured, He broke the bonds wherewith the evil spirit had held the miserable child bound. I always felt as if I must have known and loved that boy, and been his play-fellow in his happy days; and when I grew older, then the distress of the father on account of his lunatic son lay heavy at my heart. It must surely have all been a foreboding of our poor young Lord Sintram, whom I love as if he were my own child; and now the words of the weeping father in the Gospel often come into my mind,—'Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief;' and something similar I may very likely have repeated today as a chant or a prayer. Reverend father, when I consider how one dreadful imprecation of the father has kept its withering hold on the son, all seems dark before me; but, God be praised! my faith and my hope remain above."

"Good Rolf," said the priest, "I cannot clearly understand what you say about the unhappy Sintram; for I do not know when and how this affliction came upon him. If no oath or solemn promise bind you to secrecy, will you make known to me all that is connected with it!"

"Most willingly," replied Rolf. "I have long desired to have an opportunity of so doing; but you have been almost always separated from us. I dare not now leave the sleeping boy any longer alone; and tomorrow, at the earliest dawn, I must take him to his father. Will you come with me, dear sir, to our poor Sintram?"

The chaplain at once took up the small lamp which Rolf had brought with him, and they set off together through the long vaulted passages. In the small distant chamber they found the poor boy fast asleep. The light of the lamp fell strangely on his very pale face. The chaplain stood gazing at him for some time, and at length said: "certainly from his birth his features were always sharp and strongly marked, but now they are almost fearfully so for such a child; and yet no one can help having a kindly feeling towards him, whether he will or not.'

"Most true, dear sir," answered Rolf. And it was evident how his whole heart rejoiced at any word which betokened affection for his beloved young lord. Thereupon he placed the lamp where its light could not disturb the boy, and seating himself close by the priest, he began to speak in the following terms: "During

that Christmas feast of which my lord was talking to you, he and his followers discoursed much concerning the German merchants and the best means of keeping down the increasing pride and power of the trading towns. At length Biorn laid his impious hand on the golden boar's head and swore to put to death without mercy every German trader whom fate in what way soever might bring alive into his power. The gentle Verena turned pale, and would have interposed, but it was too late,—the bloody word was uttered. And immediately afterwards, as though the great enemy of souls were determined at once to secure with fresh bonds the vassal thus devoted to him, a warder came into the hall to announce that two citizens of a trading town in Germany, an old man and his son, had been shipwrecked on this coast, and were now without the gates, asking hospitality of the lord of the castle. The knight could not refrain from shuddering, but he thought himself bound by his rash vow and by that accursed heathenish golden boar. We, his retainers, were commanded to assemble in the castle yard, armed with sharp spears, which were to be hurled at the defenseless strangers at the first signal made to us. For the first, and I trust the last time in my life, I said 'No' to the commands of my lord, and that I said in a loud voice and with the heartiest determination. The Almighty, who alone knows whom He will accept and whom He will reject, armed me with resolution and strength. And Biorn might perceive whence the refusal of his

faithful old servant arose, and that it was worthy of respect. He said to me, half in anger and half in scorn: 'Go up to my wife's apartments; her attendants are running to and fro, perhaps she is ill. Go up, Rolf the Good, I say to thee, and so women shall be with women.' I thought to myself, 'Jeer on, then,' and I went silently the way that he had pointed out to me. On the stairs there met me two strange and right fearful beings, whom I had never seen before, and I know not how they got into the castle. One of them was a great, tall man, frightfully pallid and thin; the other was a dwarf-like man, with a most hideous countenance and features. Indeed, when I collected my thoughts and looked carefully at him, it appeared to me —"

Low moanings and convulsive movements of the boy here interrupted the narrative. Rolf and the chaplain hastened to his bedside, and perceived that his countenance wore an expression of fearful agony, and that he was struggling in vain to open his eyes. The priest made the sign of the cross over him, and immediately peace seemed to be restored, and his sleep again became quiet. They both returned softly to their seats.

"You see," said Rolf, "that it will not do to describe more closely those two awful beings. Suffice it to say that they went down into the court yard, and that I proceeded to my lady's apartments. I found the gentle Verena almost fainting with terror and overwhelming anxiety, and I hastened to restore her with some of

those remedies which I was able to apply by my skill, through God's gift and the healing virtues of herbs and minerals. But scarcely had she recovered her senses when, with that calm holy power which as you know is hers, she desired me to conduct her down to the court yard, saying that she must either put a stop to the fearful doings of this night, or herself fall a sacrifice. Our way took us by the little bed of the sleeping Sintram. Alas! hot tears fell from my eyes to see how evenly his gentle breath then came and went, and how sweetly he smiled in his peaceful slumbers."

The old man put his hands to his eyes and wept bitterly, but soon he resumed his sad story. "As we approached the lowest window of the staircase, we could hear distinctly the voice of the elder merchant, and on looking out the light of the torches showed me his noble features as well as the bright youthful countenance of his son. 'I take Almighty God to witness,' cried he, 'that I had no evil thought against this house! But surely I must have fallen unawares amongst heathens; it cannot be that I am in a Christian knight's castle; and if you are indeed heathens, then kill us at once. And thou, my beloved son, be patient and of good courage; in Heaven we shall learn wherefore it could not be otherwise.' I thought I could see those two fearful ones amidst the throng of retainers. The pale one had a huge curved sword in his hand, the little one held a spear notched in a strange fashion. Verena tore open the window, and

cried in silvery tones through the wild night: 'My dearest lord and husband, for the sake of your only child have pity on those harmless men! Save them from death and resist the temptation of the evil spirit.' The knight answered in his fierce wrath — but I cannot repeat his words. He staked his child on the desperate cast; he called Death and the Devil to see that he kept his word; — but hush! the boy is again moaning. Let me bring the dark tale quickly to a close. Biorn commanded his followers to strike, casting on them those fierce looks which have gained him the title of Biorn of the Fiery Eyes; while at the same time the two frightful strangers bestirred themselves very busily. Then Verena called out, with piercing anguish: 'Help, O God, my Saviour!' Those two dreadful figures disappeared; and the knight and his retainers, as if seized with blindness, rushed wildly one against the other, but without doing injury to themselves, or yet being able to strike the merchants, who ran so close a risk. They bowed reverently towards Verena, and with calm thanksgivings departed through the castle gates, which at that moment had been burst open by a violent gust of wind, and now gave a free passage to any who would go forth. The lady and I were yet standing bewildered on the stairs, when I fancied I saw the two fearful forms glide close by me, but mist-like and unreal. Verena called to me: 'Rolf, did you see a tall, pale man and a little hideous one with him, pass just now up the staircase?' I flew after them, and found, alas,

the poor boy in the same state in which you saw him a few hours ago. Ever since, the attack has come on him regularly at this time, and he is in all respects fearfully changed. The lady of the castle did not fail to discern the avenging hand of Heaven in this calamity; and as the knight, her husband, instead of repenting, ever became more truly Biorn of the Fiery Eyes, she resolved, in the walls of a cloister, by unremitting prayer, to obtain mercy in time and eternity for herself and her unhappy child."

Rolf was silent, and the chaplain, after some thought, said: "I now understand why, six years ago, Biorn confessed his guilt to me in general words and consented that his wife should take the veil. Some faint compunction must then have stirred within him, and perhaps may stir him yet. At any rate it was impossible that so tender a flower as Verena could remain longer in so rough keeping. But who is there now to watch over and protect our poor Sintram?"

"The prayer of his mother," answered Rolf. "Reverend sir, when the first dawn of day appears, as it does now, and when the morning breeze whispers through the glancing window, they ever bring to my mind the soft beaming eyes of my lady, and I again seem to hear the sweet tones of her voice. The holy Verena is, next to God, our chief aid."

"And let us add our devout supplications to the Lord," said the chaplain; and he and Rolf knelt in silent and earnest prayer by the bed

of the pale sufferer, who began to smile in his dreams.

CHAPTER III.

THE rays of the sun shining brightly into the room awoke Sintram, and raising himself up, he looked angrily at the chaplain, and said: "So there is a priest in the castle! And yet that accursed dream continues to torment me even in his very presence. Pretty priest he must be!"

"My child," answered the chaplain in the mildest tone, "I have prayed for thee most fervently, and I shall never cease doing so,—but God alone is all mighty."

"You speak very boldly to the son of the knight Biorn," cried Sintram. "'My child!' If those horrible dreams had not been again haunting me, you would make me laugh heartily."

"Young Lord Sintram," said the chaplain, I am by no means surprised that you do not know me again; for, in truth, neither do I know you again." And his eyes filled with tears as he spoke.

The good Rolf looked sorrowfully in the boy's face, saying: "Ah, my dear young master, you are so much better than you would make people believe. Why do you that? Your memory is so good that you must surely recollect your kind old friend the chaplain, who used formerly to be constantly at the castle,

and to bring you so many gifts,—bright pictures of saints, and beautiful songs."

"I know all that very well," replied Sintram thoughtfully. "My sainted mother was alive in those days."

"Our gracious lady is still living, God be praised!" said the good Rolf.

"But she does not live for us, poor sick creatures that we are!" cried Sintram. "And why will you not call her sainted? Surely she knows nothing about my dreams?"

"Yes, she does know of them," said the chaplain; "and she prays to God for you. But take heed, and restrain that wild, haughty temper of yours. It might, indeed, come to pass that she would know nothing about your dreams, and that would be if your soul were separated from your body; and then the holy angels also would cease to know anything of you."

Sintram fell back on his bed as if thunderstruck; and Rolf said with a gentle sigh: "You should not speak so severely to my poor sick child, reverend sir."

The boy sat up, and with tearful eyes he turned caressingly towards the chaplain: "Let him do as he pleases, you good, tender-hearted Rolf; he knows very well what he is about. Would you reprove him if I were slipping down a snowcleft, and he caught me up roughly by the hair of my head?"

The priest looked tenderly at him, and would have spoken his holy thoughts, when Sintram suddenly sprang off the bed and asked after

his father. As soon as he heard of the knight's departure, he would not remain another hour in the castle; and put aside the fears of the chaplain and the old esquire, lest a rapid journey should injure his hardly restored health, by saying to them: "Believe me, reverend sir, and dear old Rolf, if I were not subject to these hideous dreams, there would not be a bolder youth in the whole world; and even as it is I am not so far behind the very best. Besides, till another year has passed, my dreams are at an end."

On his somewhat imperious sign, Rolf brought out the horses. The boy threw himself boldly into the saddle, and, taking a courteous leave of the chaplain, he dashed along the frozen valley that lay between the snow-clad mountains. He had not ridden far, in company with his old attendant, when he heard a strange indistinct sound proceeding from a neighboring cleft in the rock; it was partly like the clapper of a small mill, but mingled with that were hollow groans and other tones of distress. Thither they turned their horses, and a wonderful sight showed itself to them.

A tall man, deadly pale, in a pilgrim's garb, was striving with violent though unsuccessful efforts, to work his way out of the snow, and to climb up the mountain; and thereby a quantity of bones, which were hanging loosely all about his garments, rattled one against the other, and caused the mysterious sound already mentioned. Rolf, much terrified, crossed himself, while the bold Sintram called out to the

stranger: "What art thou doing there? Give an account of thy solitary labors."

"I live in death," replied that other one with a fearful grin.

"Whose are those bones on thy clothes?"

"They are relics, young sir."

"Art thou a pilgrim?"

"Restless, quietless, I wander up and down"

"Thou must not perish here in the snow before my eyes."

"That I will not."

"Thou must come up and sit on my horse."

"That I will." And all at once he started up out of the snow with surprising strength and agility, and sat on the horse behind Sintram, clasping him tight in his long arms. The horse, startled by the rattling of the bones, as if seized with madness, rushed away through the most trackless passes. The boy soon found himself alone with his strange companion, for Rolf, breathless with fear, spurred on his horse in vain, and remained far behind them. From a snowy precipice the horse slid, without falling, into a narrow gorge, somewhat indeed exhausted, yet continuing to snort and foam as before, and still unmastered by the boy. Yet his headlong course being now changed into a rough, irregular trot, Sintram was able to breathe more freely, and to begin the following discourse with his unknown companion.

"Draw thy garment closer around thee, thou pale man, so the bones will not rattle, and I shall be able to curb my horse."

SINTRAM AND THE CRAZY PILGRIM.

"It would be of no avail, boy; it would be of no avail. The bones must rattle."

"Do not clasp me so tight with thy long arms, they are so cold."

"It cannot be helped, boy; it cannot be helped. Be content. For my long, cold arms are not pressing yet on thy heart."

"Do not breathe on me so with thy icy breath. All my strength is departing."

"I must breathe, boy; I must breathe. But do not complain. I am not blowing thee away."

The strange dialogue here came to an end; for, to Sintram's surprise, he found himself on an open plain, over which the sun was shining brightly, and at no great distance before him he saw his father's castle. While he was thinking whether he might invite the unearthly pilgrim to rest there, this one put an end to his doubts by throwing himself suddenly off the horse, whose wild course was checked by the shock. Raising his forefinger, he said to the boy: "I know old Biorn of the Fiery Eyes well: perhaps but too well. Commend me to him. It will not need to tell him my name; he will recognize me at the description." So saying, the ghastly stranger turned aside into a thick fir wood, and disappeared rattling among the tangled branches.

Slowly and thoughtfully Sintram rode on towards his father's castle, his horse now again quiet and altogether exhausted. He scarcely knew how much he ought to relate of his wonderful journey, and he also felt oppressed with anxiety for the good Rolf, who had re-

mained so far behind. He found himself at the castle gate sooner than he had expected; the drawbridge was lowered, the doors were thrown open; an attendant led the youth into the great hall, where Biorn was sitting all alone at a huge table, with many flagons and glasses before him, and suits of armor ranged on either side of him. It was his daily custom, by way of company, to have the armor of his ancestors, with closed visors, placed all around the table at which he sat. The father and son began conversing as follows:—

"Where is Rolf?"

"I do not know, father; he left me in the mountains."

"I will have Rolf shot if he cannot take better care than that of my only child."

"Then father, you will have your only child shot at the same time, for without Rolf I cannot live; and if even one single dart is aimed at him, I will be there to receive it, and to shield his true and faithful heart."

"So! Then Rolf shall not be shot; but he shall be driven from the castle."

"In that case, father, you will see me go away also; and I will give myself up to serve him in forests, in mountains, in caves."

"So! Well, then, Rolf must remain here."

"That is just what I think, father."

"Were you riding quite alone?"

"No, father, but with a strange pilgrim. He said that he knew you very well,—perhaps too well." And thereupon Sintram began to relate

and to describe all that had passed with the pale man.

"I know him also very well," said Biorn. "He is half crazed and half wise, as we sometimes are astonished at seeing that people can be. But do thou, my boy, go to rest after thy wild journey. I give you my word that Rolf shall be kindly received if he arrive here; and that if he do not come soon, he shall be sought for in the mountains."

"I trust to your word, father," said Sintram, half humble, half proud; and he did after the command of the grim lord of the castle.

CHAPTER IV.

TOWARDS evening Sintram awoke. He saw the good Rolf sitting at his bedside, and looked up in the old man's kind face with a smile of unusually innocent brightness. But soon again his dark brows were knit, and he asked: "How did my father receive you, Rolf? Did he say a harsh word to you?"

"No, my dear young lord, he did not; indeed he did not speak to me at all. At first he looked very wrathful, but he checked himself, and ordered a servant to bring me food and wine to refresh me, and afterwards to take me to your room."

"He might have kept his word better. But he is my father, and I must not judge him too

hardly. I will now go down to the evening meal." So saying he sprang up and threw on his furred mantle.

But Rolf stopped him, and said, entreatingly: "My dear young master, you would do better to take your meal today alone here in your own apartment, for there is a guest with your father in whose company I should be very sorry to see you. If you will remain here I will entertain you with pleasant tales and songs."

"There is nothing in the world which I should like better, dear Rolf," answered Sintram; "but it does not befit me to shun any man. Tell me, whom should I find with my father?"

"Alas!" said the old man, "you have already found him in the mountain. Formerly when I used to ride about the country with Biorn, we often met with him, but I was forbidden to tell you anything about him; and this is the first time that he has ever come to the castle."

"The crazy pilgrim!" replied Sintram; and he stood awhile in deep thought, as if considering the matter. At last, rousing himself, he said: "Dear old friend, I would most willingly stay here this evening all alone with you and your stories and songs, and all the pilgrims in the world should not entice me from this quiet room; but one thing must be considered. I feel a kind of dread of that pale, tall man, and by such fears no knight's son can ever suffer himself to be overcome. So be not angry, dear Rolf, if I determine to go and look that strange palmer in the face. And he shut the door of

the chamber behind him, and with firm and echoing steps proceeded to the hall.

The pilgrim and the knight were sitting opposite to each other at the great table, on which many lights were burning; and it was fearful, amongst all the lifeless armor, to see those two tall grim men move, and eat, and drink.

As the pilgrim looked up on the boy's entrance, Biorn said: "You know him already; he is my only child, and your fellow-traveller this morning."

The palmer fixed an earnest look on Sintram, and answered, shaking his head: "I know not what you mean."

Then the boy burst forth, impatiently: "It must be confessed that you deal very unfairly by us! You say that you know my father but too much, and now it seems that you know me altogether too little. Look me in the face: who allowed you to ride on his horse, and in return had his good steed driven almost wild? Speak, if you can!"

Biorn smiled, shaking his head, but well pleased, as was his wont, with his son's wild behavior, while the pilgrim shuddered as if terrified and overcome by some fearful irresistible power. At length, with a trembling voice, he said these words: "Yes, yes, my dear young lord, you are surely quite right; you are perfectly right in every thing which you may please to assert."

Then the lord of the castle laughed aloud, and said: "Why, thou strange pilgrim, what is become of all thy wonderfully fine speeches

and warnings now? Has the boy all at once struck thee dumb and powerless? Beware, thou prophet-messenger, beware!"

But the palmer cast a fearful look on Biorn, which seemed to quench the light of his fiery eyes, and said solemnly, in a thundering voice: "Between me and thee, old man, the case stands quite otherwise. We have nothing to reproach each other with. And now suffer me to sing a song to you on the lute." He stretched out his hand and took down from the wall a forgotten and half-strung lute which was hanging there, and with surprising skill and rapidity, having put it in a state fit for use, he struck some chords and raised this song to the low melancholy tones of the instrument: —

"The flow'ret was mine own, mine own,
But I have lost its fragrance rare,
And knightly name and freedom fair,
Through sin, through sin alone.

The flow'ret was thine own, thine own,
Why cast away what thou didst win?
Thou knight no more, but slave of sin,
Thou'rt fearfully alone."

"Have a care!" shouted he at the close in a pealing voice, as he pulled the strings so mightily that they all broke with a clanging wail, and a cloud of dust rose from the old lute which spread round him like a mist.

Sintram had been watching him narrowly whilst he was singing, and more and more did he feel convinced that it was impossible that this man and his fellow-traveller of the morn-

ing could be one and the same. Nay, the doubt rose to certainty when the stranger again looked round at him with the same timid, anxious air, and with many excuses and low reverences hung the lute in its old place, and then ran out of the hall as if bewildered with terror, in strange contrast with the proud and stately bearing which he had shown to Biorn.

The eyes of the boy were now directed to his father, and he saw that he had sunk back senseless in his seat, as if struck by a blow. Sintram's cries called Rolf and other attendants into the hall; and only by great labor did their united efforts awake the lord of the castle. His looks were still wild and disordered; but he allowed himself to be taken to rest, quiet and yielding.

CHAPTER V.

AN illness followed this sudden attack; and during the course of it, the stout old knight, in the midst of his delirious ravings, did not cease to affirm confidently that he must and should recover. He laughed proudly when his fever fits came on, and rebuked them for daring to attack him so needlessly. Then he murmured to himself: "That was not the right one yet; there must still be another one out in the cold mountains."

Always at such words Sintram involuntarily shuddered: they seemed to strengthen his

notion that he who had ridden with him, and he who had sat at table in the castle, were two quite distinct persons; and he knew not why, but this thought was inexpressibly awful to him.

Biorn recovered, and appeared to have entirely forgotten his adventure with the palmer. He hunted in the mountains; he carried on his usual wild warfare with his neighbors; and Sintram, as he grew up, became his almost constant companion, whereby each year a fearful strength of body and spirit was unfolded in the youth. Every one trembled at the sight of his sharp pallid features, his dark rolling eyes, his tall, muscular, and somewhat lean form; and yet no one hated him,—not even those whom he distressed or injured in his wildest humors. This might arise in part out of regard to old Rolf, who seldom left him for long, and who always held a softening influence over him; but also many of those who had known the Lady Verena while she still lived in the world affirmed that a faint reflection of her heavenly expression floated over the very unlike features of her son, and that by this their hearts were won.

Once, just at the beginning of spring, Biorn and his son were hunting in the neighborhood of the sea coast, over a tract of country which did not belong to them, drawn thither less by the love of sport than by the wish of bidding defiance to a chieftain whom they detested, and thus exciting a feud. At that season of the year, when his winter dreams had just past off,

Sintram was always unusually fierce and disposed for warlike adventures. And this day he was enraged at the chieftain for not coming in arms from his castle to hinder their hunting; and he cursed, in the wildest words, his tame patience and love of peace. Just then one of his wild young companions rushed towards him, shouting joyfully: "Be content, my dear young lord! I will wager that all is coming about as we and you wish; for as I was pursuing a wounded deer down to the sea coast, I saw a sail and a vessel filled with armed men making for the shore. Doubtless, your enemy purposes to fall upon you from the coast."

Joyfully and secretly Sintram called all his followers together, being resolved this time to take the combat on himself alone, and then to rejoin his father, and astonish him with the sight of captured foes and other tokens of victory.

The hunters, thoroughly acquainted with every cliff and rock on the coast, hid themselves around the landing place; and soon the strange vessel hove nearer with swelling sails, till at length it came to anchor, and its crew began to disembark in unsuspicious security. At the head of them appeared a knight of high degree, in blue steel armor richly inlaid with gold. His head was bare, for he carried his costly golden helmet hanging on his left arm. He looked royally around him; and his countenance, which dark brown locks shaded, was pleasant to behold; and a well-trimmed moustache fringed his mouth, from which, as he

smiled, gleamed forth two rows of pearl-white teeth.

A feeling came across Sintram that he must already have seen this knight somewhere; and he stood motionless for a few moments. But suddenly he raised his hand, to make the agreed signal of attack. In vain did the good Rolf, who had just succeeded in getting up to him, whisper in his ear that these could not be the foes whom he had taken them for, but that they were unknown, and certainly high and noble strangers.

"Let them be who they may," replied the wild youth, "they have enticed me here to wait, and they shall pay the penalty of thus fooling me. Say not another word, if you value your life." And immediately he gave the signal, a thick shower of javelins followed from all sides, and the Norwegian warriors rushed forth with flashing swords. They found their foes as brave, or somewhat braver, than they could have desired. More fell on the side of those who made than of those who received the assault; and the strangers appeared to understand surprisingly the Norwegian manner of fighting. The knight in steel armor had not in his haste put on his helmet; but it seemed as if he in no wise needed such protection, for his good sword afforded him sufficient defence even against the spears and darts which were incessantly hurled at him, as with rapid skill he received them on the shining blade, and dashed them far away, shivered into fragments.

Sintram could not at the first onset penetrate

to where the shining hero was standing, as all his followers, eager after such a noble prey, thronged closely around him; but now the way was cleared enough for him to spring towards the brave stranger, shouting a war-cry, and brandishing his sword above his head.

"Gabrielle!" cried the knight, as he dexterously parried the heavy blow which was descending, and with one powerful sword thrust he laid the youth prostrate on the ground; then placing his knee on Sintram's breast, he drew forth a flashing dagger, and held it before his eyes as he lay astonished. All at once the men-at-arms stood around like walls. Sintram felt that no hope remained for him. He determined to die as it became a bold warrior; and, without giving one sign of emotion, he looked on the fatal weapon with a steady gaze.

As he lay with his eyes cast upwards, he fancied that there appeared suddenly from Heaven a wondrously beautiful female form in a bright attire of blue and gold. "Our ancestors told truly of the Valkyrias," murmured he. "Strike, then, thou unknown conqueror."

But with this the knight did not comply; neither was it a Valkyria who had so suddenly appeared, but the beautiful wife of the stranger, who, having advanced to the high edge of the vessel, had thus met the upraised look of Sintram.

"Folko," cried she in the softest tone, "thou knight without reproach! I know that thou sparest the vanquished."

The knight sprang up, and with courtly grace

stretched out his hand to the conquered youth, saying: "Thank the noble lady of Montfaucon for your life and liberty. But if you are so totally devoid of all goodness as to wish to resume the combat, here am I; let it be yours to begin."

Sintram sank, deeply ashamed, on his knees, and wept; for he had often heard speak of the high renown of the French knight Folko of Montfaucon, who was related to his father's house, and of the grace and beauty of his gentle lady Gabrielle.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Lord of Montfaucon looked with astonishment at his strange foe; and as he gazed on him more and more, recollections arose in his mind of that northern race from whom he was descended, and with whom he had always maintained friendly relations. A golden bear's claw with which Sintram's cloak was fastened at length made all clear to him.

"Have you not," said he, "a valiant and far-famed kinsman called the Sea-king Arinbiorn, who carries on his helmet golden vulture-wings? And is not your father the knight Biorn? For surely the bear's claw on your mantle must be the cognisance of your house."

Sintram assented to all this, in deep and humble shame.

The knight of Montfaucon raised him from

the ground, and said gravely, yet gently: "We are, then, of kin the one to the other; but I could never have believed that any one of our noble house would attack a peaceful man without provocation, and that, too, without giving warning."

"Slay me at once," answered Sintram, "if, indeed, I am worthy to die by so noble hands. I can no longer endure the light of day."

"Because you have been overcome?" asked Montfaucon.

Sintram shook his head.

"Or is it, rather, because you have committed an unknightly action?"

The glow of shame that overspread the youth's countenance said yes to this.

"But you should not on that account wish to die," continued Montfaucon. "You should rather wish to live, that you may prove your repentance and make your name illustrious by many noble deeds, for you are endowed with a bold spirit and with strength of limb, and also with the eagle-glance of a chieftain. I should have made you a knight this very hour if you had borne yourself as bravely in a good cause as you have just now in a bad. See to it that I may do it soon. You may yet become a vessel of high honor."

A joyous sound of shawns and silver rebecks interrupted his discourse. The lady Gabrielle, bright as the morning, had now come down from the ship, surrounded by her maidens; and, instructed in a few words by Folko who was his late foe, she took the combat as some

mere trial of arms, saying: "You must not be cast down, noble youth, because my wedded lord has won the prize; for be it known to you that in the whole world there is but one knight who can boast of not having been overcome by the Baron of Montfaucon. And who can say," continued she, sportively, "whether even that would have happened had he not set himself to win back the magic ring from me, his lady-love, destined to him, as well by the choice of my own heart as by the will of Heaven!"

Folko, smiling, bent his head over the snow-white hand of his lady, and then bade the youth conduct them to his father's castle.

Rolf took upon himself to see to the disembarking of the horses and valuables of the strangers, filled with joy at the thought that an angel in woman's form had appeared to soften his beloved young master, and perhaps even to free him from that early curse.

Sintram sent messengers in all directions to seek for his father, and to announce to him the arrival of his noble guests. They therefore found the old knight in his castle, with everything prepared for their reception. Gabrielle could not enter the vast, dark-looking building, without a slight shudder, which was increased when she saw the rolling fiery eyes of its lord; even the pale, dark-haired Sintram seemed to her very fearful, and she sighed to herself: "Oh! what an awful abode have you brought me to visit, my knight! Would that we were once again in my sunny Gascony, or in your knightly Normandy!"

But the grave yet courteous reception, the deep respect paid to her grace and beauty, and to the high fame of Folko, helped to reassure her, and soon her bird-like pleasure in novelties was awakened through the strange significant appearances of this new world. And besides, it could only be for a passing moment that any womanly fears found a place in her breast when her lord was near at hand, for well did she know what effectual protection that brave baron was ever ready to afford to all those who were dear to him or committed to his charge.

Soon afterwards Rolf passed through the great hall in which Biorn and his guests were seated, conducting their attendants, who had charge of the baggage, to their rooms. Gabrielle caught sight of her favorite lute, and desired a page to bring it to her that she might see if the precious instrument had been injured by the sea voyage. As she bent over it with earnest attention, and her taper fingers ran up and down the strings, a smile, like the dawn of spring, passed over the dark countenances of Biorn and his son, and both said, with an involuntary sigh: "Ah! if you would but play on that lute and sing to it! It would be but too beautiful!" The lady looked up at them, well pleased, and smiling her assent, she began this song: —

"Songs and flowers are returning,
And radiant skies of May,
Earth her choicest gifts is yielding,
But one is past away.

The spring that clothes with tend'rest green
  Each grove and sunny plain,
Shines not for my forsaken heart,
  Brings not my joys again.

Warble not so, thou nightingale,
  Upon thy blooming spray,
Thy sweetness now will burst my heart,
  I cannot bear thy lay.

For flowers and birds are come again,
  And breezes mild of May,
But treasured hopes and golden hours
  Are lost to me for aye!"

The two Norwegians sat plunged in melancholy thought; but especially Sintram's eyes began to brighten with a milder expression, his cheeks glowed, every feature softened, till those who looked at him could have fancied they saw a glorified spirit. The good Rolf, who had stood listening to the song, rejoiced thereat from his heart, and devoutly raised his hands in pious gratitude to heaven. But Gabrielle's astonishment suffered her not to take her eyes from Sintram. At last she said to him: "I should much like to know what has so struck you in that little song. It is merely a simple lay of the spring, full of the images which that sweet season never fails to call up in the minds of my countrymen."

"But is your home really so lovely, so wondrously rich in song?" cried the enraptured Sintram. "Then I am no longer surprised at your heavenly beauty, at the power which you exercise over my hard, wayward heart! For a paradise of song must surely send such angelic

messengers through the ruder parts of the world." And so saying he fell on his knees before the lady in an attitude of deep humility. Folko looked on all the while with an approving smile, whilst Gabrielle, in much embarrassment, seemed hardly to know how to treat the half-wild, half-tamed young stranger. After some hesitation, however, she held out her fair hand to him, and said as she gently raised him: "Surely one who listens with such delight to music must himself know how to awaken its strains. Take my lute, and let us hear a graceful inspired song."

But Sintram drew back, and would not take the instrument; and he said: "Heaven forbid that my rough, untutored hand should touch those delicate strings! For even were I to begin with some soft strains, yet before long the wild spirit which dwells in me would break out, and there would be an end of the form and sound of the beautiful instrument. No, no; suffer me rather to fetch my own huge harp, strung with bears' sinews set in brass, for in truth I do feel myself inspired to play and sing."

Gabrielle murmured a half-frightened assent; and Sintram having quickly brought his harp, began to strike it loudly, and to sing these words with a voice no less powerful:—

"Sir knight, sir knight, oh, whither away,
With thy snow-white sail on the foaming spray?"
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"Too long have I trod upon ice and snow;
I seek the bowers where roses blow."
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

He steered on his course by night and day
Till he cast his anchor in Naples Bay.
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers.

There wandered a lady upon the strand,
Her fair hair bound with a golden band.
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"Hail to thee! hail to thee! lady bright;
Mine own shalt thou be ere morning light."
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"Not so, sir knight," the lady replied,
"For you speak to the margrave's chosen bride."
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"Your lover may come with his shield and spear,
And the victor shall win thee, lady dear!"
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"Nay, seek for another bride, I pray;
Most fair are the maidens of Naples Bay."
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

"No, lady, for thee my heart doth burn;
And the world cannot now my purpose turn."
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

Then came the young margrave, bold and brave;
But low was he laid in a grassy grave.
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

And then the fierce Northman joyously cried:
"Now shall I possess lands, castle, and bride!"
Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers!

Sintram's song was ended, but his eyes glared wildly, and the vibrations of the harp strings still resounded in a marvellous manner. Biorn's attitude was again erect; he stroked his long beard and rattled his sword, as if in great delight at what he had just heard. Much shud-

dered Gabrielle before the wild song and these strange forms; but only till she cast a glance on the Lord of Montfaucon, who sat there smiling in all his hero strength unmoved, while the rough uproar passed by him like an autumnal storm.

CHAPTER VII.

SOME weeks after this, in the twilight of evening, Sintram, very disturbed, came down to the castle garden. Although the presence of Gabrielle never failed to soothe and calm him, yet if she left the apartment for even a few instants, the fearful wildness of his spirit seemed to return with renewed strength. So even now, after having long and kindly read legends of the olden times to his father Biorn, she had retired to her chamber. The tones of her lute could be distinctly heard in the garden below; but the sounds only drove the bewildered youth more impetuously through the shades of the ancient elms. Stooping suddenly to avoid some over-hanging branches, he unexpectedly came upon something against which he had almost struck, and which, at first sight, he took for a small bear standing on its hind legs, with a long and strangely-crooked horn on its head. He drew back in surprise and fear. It addressed him in a grating man's voice: "Well, my brave young knight, whence come you? whither go you? wherefore so ter-

rified?" And then first he saw that he had before him a little old man so wrapped up in a rough garment of fur, that scarcely one of his features was visible, and wearing in his cap a strange-looking long feather.

"But whence come *you?* and whither go *you?*" returned the angry Sintram. "For of you such questions should be asked. What have you to do in our domains, you hideous little being!"

"Well, well," sneered the other one, "I am thinking that I am quite big enough as I am,—one cannot always be a giant. And as to the rest, why should you find fault that I go here hunting for snails? Surely snails do not belong to the game which your high mightinesses consider that you alone have a right to follow! Now, on the other hand, I know how to prepare from them an excellent high-flavored drink; and I have taken enough for today: marvellous fat little beasts, with wise faces like a man's, and long twisted horns on their heads. Would you like to see them? Look here!"

And then he began to unfasten and fumble about his fur garment; but Sintram, filled with disgust and horror, said, "Psha! I detest such animals! Be quiet, and tell me at once who and what you yourself are."

"Are you so bent upon knowing my name?" replied the little man. "Let it content you that I am master of all secret knowledge, and well versed in the most intricate depths of ancient history. Ah! my young sir, if you would only hear them! But you are afraid of me."

SINTRAM AND THE LITTLE MASTER.

"Afraid of you!" cried Sintram, with a wild laugh.

"Many a better man than you has been so before now," muttered the little Master; "but they did not like being told of it any more than you do."

"To prove that you are mistaken," said Sintram, "I will remain here with you till the moon stands high in the heavens. But you must tell me one of your stories the while."

The little man, much pleased, nodded his head; and as they paced together up and down a retired elm walk, he began discoursing as follows:—

"Many hundred years ago a young knight, called Paris of Troy, lived in that sunny land of the south where are found the sweetest songs, the brightest flowers, and the most beautiful ladies. You know a song that tells of that fair land, do you not, young sir? 'Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers.'" Sintram bowed his head in assent, and sighed deeply. "Now," resumed the little Master, "it happened that Paris led that kind of a life which is not uncommon in those countries, and of which their poets often sing: he would pass whole months together in the garb of a peasant, piping in the woods and mountains, and pasturing his flocks. Here one day three beautiful sorceresses appeared to him, disputing about a golden apple; and from him they sought to know which of them was the most beautiful, since to her the golden fruit was to be awarded. The first knew how to give

thrones, and sceptres, and crowns; the second could give wisdom and knowledge; and the third could prepare philtres and love charms which could not fail of securing the affections of the fairest of women. Each one in turn proffered her choicest gifts to the young shepherd, in order that, tempted by them, he might adjudge the apple to her. But as fair women charmed him more than anything else in the world, he said that the third was the most beautiful: her name was Venus. The two others departed in great displeasure; but Venus bid him put on his knightly armor and his helmet adorned with waving feathers, and then she led him to a famous city called Sparta, where ruled the noble duke Menelaus. His young duchess Helen was the loveliest woman on earth, and the sorceress offered her to Paris in return for the golden apple. He was most ready to have her, and wished for nothing better; but he asked how he was to gain possession of her."

"Paris must have been a sorry knight," interrupted Sintram. "Such things are easily settled. The husband is challenged to a single combat, and he that is victorious carries off the wife."

"But duke Menelaus was the host of the young knight," said the narrator.

"Listen to me, little Master," cried Sintram; "he might have asked the sorceress for some other beautiful woman, and then have mounted his horse, or weighed anchor, and departed."

"Yes, yes; it is very easy to say so," replied

the old man. "But if you only knew how bewitchingly lovely this duchess Helen was, no room was left for change." And then he began a glowing description of the charms of this wondrously beautiful woman, but likening the image to Gabrielle so closely, feature for feature, that Sintram, tottering, was forced to lean against a tree. The little Master stood opposite to him grinning, and asked: "Well now, could you have advised that poor knight Paris to fly from her?"

"Tell me at once what happened next," stammered Sintram.

"The sorceress acted honorably towards Paris," continued the old man. "She declared to him that if he would carry away the lovely duchess to his own city Troy, he might do so, and thus cause the ruin of his whole house and of his country; but that during ten years he would be able to defend himself in Troy, and rejoice in the sweet love of Helen."

"And he accepted those terms, or he was a fool!" cried the youth.

"To be sure he accepted them," whispered the little Master. "I would have done so in his place! And do you know, young sir, the look of things then was just as they are happening today. The newly risen moon, partly veiled by clouds, was shining dimly through the thick branches of the trees in the silence of evening. Leaning against an old tree, as you now are doing, stood the young enamored knight Paris, and at his side the enchantress Venus, but so disguised and transformed,

that she did not look much more beautiful than I do. And by the silvery light of the moon, the form of the beautiful beloved one was seen sweeping by alone amidst the whispering boughs." He was silent, and like as in the mirror of his deluding words, Gabrielle just then actually herself appeared, musing as she walked alone down the alley of elms.

"Man,— fearful Master,—by what name shall I call you? To what would you drive me?" muttered the trembling Sintram.

"Thou knowest thy father's strong stone castle on the Moon-rocks!" replied the old man. "The castellan and the garrison are true and devoted to thee. It could stand a ten years' siege; and the little gate which leads to the hills is open, as was that of the citadel of Sparta for Paris."

And, in fact, the youth saw through a gate, left open he knew not how, the dim, distant mountains glittering in the moonlight. "And if he did not accept, he was a fool," said the little Master, with a grin, echoing Sintram's former words.

At that moment Gabrielle stood close by him. She was within reach of his grasp, had he made the least movement; and a moonbeam, suddenly breaking forth, transfigured, as it were, her heavenly beauty. The youth had already bent forward —

"My Lord and God, I pray
Turn from his heart away
This world's turmoil;

And call him to Thy light,
Be it through sorrow's night,
Through pain or toil."

These words were sung by old Rolf at that very time, as he lingered on the still margin of the castle fish pond, where he prayed alone to Heaven, full of foreboding care. They reached Sintram's ear; he stood as if spell-bound, and made the sign of the cross. Immediately the little Master fled away, jumping uncouthly on one leg, through the gates, and shutting them after him with a yell.

Gabrielle shuddered, terrified at the wild noise. Sintram approached her softly, and said, offering his arm to her: "Suffer me to lead you back to the castle. The night in these northern regions is often wild and fearful."

CHAPTER VIII.

THEY found the two knights drinking wine within. Folko was relating stories in his usual mild and cheerful manner, and Biorn was listening with a moody air, but yet as if, against his will, the dark cloud might pass away before that bright and gentle courtesy. Gabrielle saluted the baron with a smile, and signed to him to continue his discourse, as she took her place near the knight Biorn, full of watchful kindness. Sintram stood by the hearth abstracted and melancholy; and the em-

bers, as he stirred them, cast a strange glow over his pallid features.

"And of all the German trading towns," continued Montfaucon, "the largest and richest is Hamburgh. In Normandy we willingly see their merchants land on our coasts, and those excellent people never fail to prove themselves our friends when we seek their advice and assistance. When I first visited Hamburgh, every honor and respect was paid to me. I found its inhabitants engaged in a war with a neighboring count, and immediately I used my sword for them, vigorously and successfully."

"Your sword! your knightly sword!" interrupted Biorn; and the old wonted fire flashed from his eyes. "Against a knight, and for shopkeepers!"

"Sir knight," replied Folko calmly, "the barons of Montfaucon have ever used their swords as they chose, without the interference of another; and as I have received this good custom, so do I wish to hand it on. If you agree not to this, so speak it freely out. But I forbid every rude word against the men of Hamburgh, since I have declared them to be my friends."

Biorn cast down his haughty eyes, and their fire faded away. In a low voice he said: "Proceed, noble baron. You are right, and I am wrong."

Then Folko stretched out his hand to him across the table and resumed his narration: "Amongst all my beloved Hamburghers the

dearest to me are two men of marvellous experience, a father and son. What have they not seen and done in the remotest corners of the earth, and instituted in their native town! Praise be to God, my life cannot be called unfruitful, but compared with the wise Gotthard Lentz and his stout-hearted son Rudlieb, I look upon myself as an esquire who has perhaps been some few times to tourneys, and besides that has never hunted out of his own forests. They have converted, subdued, gladdened dark men whom I know not how to name; and the wealth which they have brought back with them has all been devoted to the common weal, as if fit for no other purpose. On their return from their long and perilous sea voyages, they hasten to an hospital which has been founded by them, and where they undertake the part of overseers and of careful and patient nurses. Then they proceed to select the most fitting spots whereon to erect new towers and fortresses for the defence of their beloved country. Next they repair to the houses where strangers and travellers receive hospitality at their cost; and at last they return to their own abode, to entertain their guests, rich and noble like kings, and simple and unconstrained like shepherds. Many a tale of their wondrous adventures serves to enliven these sumptuous feasts. Amongst others I remember to have heard my friends relate one at which my hair stood on end. Possibly I may gain some more complete information on the subject from you. It appears that several years ago, just about the

time of the Christmas festival, Gotthard and Rudlieb were shipwrecked on the coast of Norway, during a violent winter tempest. They could never exactly ascertain the situation of the rocks on which their vessel stranded; but so much is certain, that very near the sea shore stood a huge castle, to which the father and son betook themselves, seeking for that assistance and shelter which Christian people are ever willing to afford each other in case of need. They went alone, leaving their followers to watch the injured ship. The castle gates were thrown open, and they thought all was well. But on a sudden the court yard was filled with armed men, who with one accord aimed their sharp iron-pointed spears at the defenseless strangers, whose dignified remonstrances and mild entreaties were only heard in sullen silence or with scornful jeerings. After a while a knight came down the stairs, with fire-flashing eyes. They hardly knew whether to think they saw a spectre, or a wild heathen; he gave a signal and the fatal spears closed around them. At that instant the soft tones of a woman's voice fell on their ear, calling on the Saviour's holy name for aid; at the sound the spectres in the court yard rushed madly one against the other, the gates burst open, and Gotthard and Rudlieb fled away, catching a glimpse as they went of an angelic woman who appeared at one of the windows of the castle. They made every exertion to get their ship again afloat, choosing to trust themselves to the sea rather than to that barbarous coast;

and at last, after manifold dangers, they landed at Denmark. They say that some heathen must have owned the cruel castle, but I hold it to be some ruined fortress, deserted by men, in which hellish spectres were wont to hold their nightly meetings. What heathen could be found so demon-like as to offer death to shipwrecked strangers instead of refreshment and shelter?"

Biorn gazed fixedly on the ground as though he were turned into stone; but Sintram came toward the table, and said: "Father, let us seek out this godless abode, and lay it level with the dust. I cannot tell how, but somehow I feel quite sure that the accursed deed of which we have just heard is alone the cause of my frightful dreams."

Enraged at his son, Biorn rose up and would perhaps again have uttered some dreadful words, but Heaven decreed otherwise, for just at that moment the pealing notes of a trumpet were heard which drowned the angry tones of his voice, the great doors opened slowly and a herald entered the hall. He bowed reverently and then said: "I am sent by Jarl Eric the Aged. He returned two days ago from his expedition to the Grecian seas. His wish had been to take vengeance on the island which is called Chios, where fifty years ago his father was slain by the soldiers of the emperor. But your kinsman, the sea-king Arinbiorn, who was lying there at anchor, tried to pacify him. To this Jarl Eric would not listen; so the sea-king said next that he would never suffer Chios to

be laid waste, because it was an island where the lays of an old Greek bard, called Homer, were excellently sung, and where, moreover, a very choice wine was made. Words proving of no avail, a combat ensued in which Arinbiorn had so much the advantage that Jarl Eric lost two of his ships, and only with difficulty escaped in one which had already sustained great damage. Eric the Aged has now resolved to take revenge on some of the sea-king's race, since Arinbiorn himself is seldom on the spot. Will you, Biorn of the Fiery Eyes, at once pay as large a penalty in cattle, and money, and goods as it may please the Jarl to demand? Or will you prepare to meet him with an armed force at Niflung's Heath seven days hence?

Biorn bowed his head quietly, and replied in a mild tone: "Seven days hence at Niflung's Heath." He then offered to the herald a golden goblet full of rich wine, and added: "Drink that, and then carry off with thee the cup which thou hast emptied."

"The Baron of Montfaucon likewise sends greeting to thy chieftain, Jarl Eric," interposed Folko; "and engages to be also at Niflung's Heath, as the hereditary friend of the sea-king, and also as the kinsman and guest of Biorn of the Fiery Eyes."

The herald was seen to tremble at the name of Montfaucon; he bowed very low, cast an anxious, reverential look at the baron, and left the hall.

Gabrielle looked on her knight, smiling lovingly and securely, for she well knew his vic-

torious prowess; and she only asked: "Where shall I remain, whilst you go forth to battle, Folko?"

"I had hoped," answered Biorn, "that you would be well contented to stay in this castle, lovely lady; I leave my son to guard you and attend on you."

Gabrielle hesitated an instant; and Sintram, who had resumed his position near the fire, muttered to himself as he fixed his eyes on the bright flames which were flashing up: "Yes, yes, so it will probably happen. I can fancy that duke Menelaus had just left Sparta on some warlike expedition, when the young knight Paris met the lovely Helen that evening in the garden."

But Gabrielle, shuddering, although she knew not why, said quickly: "Without you, Folko? And must I forego the joy of seeing you fight? or the honor of tending you, should you chance to receive a wound!"

Folko bowed, gracefully thanking his lady, and replied: "Come with your knight, since such is your pleasure, and be to him a bright guiding star. It is a good old northern custom that ladies should be present at knightly combats, and no true warrior of the north will fail to respect the place whence beams the light of their eyes. Unless, indeed," continued he with an inquiring look at Biorn, "unless Jarl Eric is not worthy of his forefather?"

"A man of honor," said Biorn confidently.

"Then array yourself, my fairest love," said the delighted Folko; "array yourself and come

forth with us to the battle field to behold and judge our deeds."

"Come forth with us to the battle," echoed Sintram in a sudden transport of joy.

And they all dispersed in calm cheerfulness; Sintram betaking himself again to the wood, while the others retired to rest.

CHAPTER IX.

IT was a wild dreary track of country that which bore the name of Niflung's Heath. According to tradition, the young Niflung, son of Hogni, the last of his race, had there ended darkly a sad and unsuccessful life. Many ancient grave stones were still standing around about; and in the few oak trees scattered here and there over the plain, huge eagles had built their nests. The beating of their heavy wings as they fought together, and their wild screams, were heard far off in more thickly peopled regions; and at the sound children would tremble in their cradles, and old men quake with fear as they slumbered over the blazing hearth.

As the seventh night, the last before the day of combat, was just beginning, two large armies were seen descending from the hills in opposite directions; that which came from the west was commanded by Eric the Aged, that from the east by Biorn of the Fiery Eyes. They appeared thus early in compliance with

the custom which required that adversaries should always present themselves at the appointed field of battle before the time named, in order to prove that they rather sought than dreaded the fight. Folko forthwith pitched on the most convenient spot the tent of blue samite fringed with gold, which he carried with him to shelter his gentle lady; whilst Sintram, in the character of herald, rode over to Jarl Eric to announce to him that the beauteous Gabrielle of Montfaucon was present in the army of the knight Biorn, and would the next morning be present as a judge of the combat.

Jarl Eric bowed low on receiving this pleasing message; and ordered his bards to strike up a lay, the words of which ran as follows: —

"Warriors bold of Eric's band,
Gird your glittering armor on,
Stand beneath tomorrow's sun,
In your might.
Fairest dame that ever gladdened
Our wild shores with beauty's vision,
May thy bright eyes o'er our combat
Judge the right!

Tidings of yon noble stranger
Long ago have reached our ears,
Wafted upon southern breezes,
O'er the wave.
Now midst yonder hostile ranks,
In his warlike pride he meets us,
Folko comes! Fight, men of Eric,
True and brave!"

These wondrous tones floated over the plain, and reached the tent of Gabrielle. It was no new thing to her to hear her knight's fame cele-

brated on all sides; but now that she listened to his praises bursting forth in the stillness of night from the mouth of his enemies, she could scarce refrain from kneeling at the feet of the mighty chieftain. But he with courteous tenderness held her up, and pressing his lips fervently on her soft hand, he said: "My deeds, O lovely lady, belong to thee and not to me!"

Now the night had passed away, and the east was glowing; and on Niflung's Heath there was waving, and resounding, and glowing too. Knights put on their rattling armor, war-horses began to neigh, the morning draught went around in gold and silver goblets, while war songs and the clang of harps resounded in the midst. A joyous march was heard in Biorn's camp, as Montfaucon, with his troops and retainers, clad in bright steel armor, conducted their lady up to a neighboring hill, where she would be safe from the spears which would soon be flying in all directions, and whence she could look freely over the battle field. The morning sun, as it were in homage, played over her beauty; and as she came in view of the camp of Jarl Eric, his soldiers lowered their weapons, whilst the chieftains bent low the crests of their huge helmets. Two of Montfaucon's pages remained in attendance on Gabrielle; for so noble a service not unwillingly bridling their love of fighting. Both armies passed in front of her, saluting her and singing as they went; they then placed themselves in array, and the fight began.

The spears flew from the hands of the stout

northern warriors, rattling against the broad shields under which they sheltered themselves, or sometimes clattering as they met in the air. At intervals, on one side or the other, a man was struck, and fell silent in his blood. Then the Knight of Montfaucon advanced with his troop of Norman horsemen,—even as he dashed past, he did not fail to lower his shining sword to salute Gabrielle; and then with an exulting war cry, which burst from many a voice, they charged the left wing of the enemy. Eric's foot soldiers, kneeling firmly, received them with fixed javelins. Many a noble horse fell wounded to death, and in falling brought his rider with him to the ground; others again crushed their foes under them in their death fall. Falko rushed through,—he and his war steed unwounded,—followed by a troop of chosen knights. Already were they falling into disorder, already were Biorn's warriors giving shouts of victory, when a troop of horse, headed by Jarl Eric himself, advanced against the valiant baron; and whilst his Normans, hastily assembled, assisted him in repelling this new attack, the enemy's infantry were gradually forming themselves into a thick mass, which rolled on and on. All these movements seemed caused by a warrior whose loud, piercing shout was heard in the midst. And scarcely were the troops formed into this strange array when suddenly they spread themselves out on all sides, carrying everything before them with the irresistible force of the burning torrent from Hecla.

Biorn's soldiers, who had thought to enclose their enemies, lost courage and gave way before this wondrous onset. The knight himself in vain attempted to stem the tide of fugitives, and with difficulty escaped being carried away by it.

Sintram stood looking on this scene of confusion with mute indignation; friends and foes passed by him, all equally avoiding him, and dreading to come in contact with one whose aspect was so fearful, nay, almost unearthly, in his motionless rage. He aimed no blow either to right or left; his powerful battle-axe rested in his hand; but his eyes flashed fire, and seemed to be piercing the enemy's ranks through and through, as if he would find out who it was that had conjured up this sudden warlike spirit. He succeeded. A small man, clothed in strange-looking armor, with large golden horns on his helmet, and a long visor advancing in front of it, was leaning on a two-edged curved spear, and seemed to be looking with derision at the flight of Biorn's troops as they were pursued by their victorious foes. "That is he," cried Sintram; "he who will drive us from the field before the eyes of Gabrielle!" And with the swiftness of an arrow he flew towards him with a wild shout. The combat was fierce, but not of long duration. To the wondrous dexterity of his adversary Sintram opposed his far superior size; and he dealt so fearful a blow on the horned helmet that a stream of blood rushed forth. The small man fell as if stunned, and after some

frightful convulsive movements, his limbs appeared to stiffen in death.

His fall gave the signal for that of all Eric's army. Even those who had not seen him fall suddenly lost their courage and eagerness for the battle, and retreated with uncertain steps, or ran in wild affright on the spears of their enemies. At the same time Montfaucon was dispersing Jarl Eric's cavalry, after a desperate conflict,—had hurled their chief from the saddle, and taken him prisoner with his own hand. Biorn of the Fiery Eyes stood victorious in the middle of the field of battle. The day was won.

CHAPTER X.

IN sight of both armies, with glowing cheeks and looks of modest humility, Sintram was conducted by the brave baron up the hill where Gabrielle stood in all the lustre of her beauty. Both warriors bent the knee before her, and Folko said solemnly: "Lady, this valiant youth of a noble race has deserved the reward of this day's victory. I pray you, let him receive it from your fair hand."

Gabrielle bowed courteously, took off her scarf of blue and gold, and fastened to it a bright sword which a page brought to her on a cushion of cloth of silver. She then, with a smile, presented the noble gift to Sintram, who was bending forward to receive it, when sud-

denly Gabrielle drew back, and turning to Folko said: "Noble baron, should not he on whom I bestow a scarf and sword be first admitted into the order of knighthood?" Light as a feather, Folko sprang up, and bowing low before his lady, gave the youth the accolade with solemn earnestness. Then Gabrielle buckled on his sword, saying: "For the honor of God and the service of virtuous ladies, young knight. I saw you fight, I saw you conquer, and my earnest prayers followed you. Fight and conquer often again, as you have done this day, that the beams of your renown may shine over my far-distant country." And, at a sign from Folko, she offered her tender lips for the new knight to kiss. Thrilling all over, and full of a holy joy, Sintram arose in deep silence, and hot tears streamed down his softened countenance, whilst the shout and the trumpets of the assembled troops greeted the youth with stunning applause. Old Rolf stood silently on one side, and as he looked in the mild, beaming eyes of his foster child he calmly and piously returned thanks: —

> "The strife at length hath found its end;
> Rich blessings now shall Heaven send!
> The evil foe is slain!"

Biorn and Jarl Eric had the while been talking together eagerly, but not unkindly. The conqueror now led his vanquished enemy up the hill, and presented him to the baron and Gabrielle, saying: "Instead of two enemies, you now see two sworn allies; and I request

you, my beloved guests and kinsfolk, to receive him graciously as one who henceforward belongs to us."

"He was so always," added Eric, smiling; "I sought, indeed, revenge; but I have now had enough of defeats both by sea and land. Yet I thank Heaven that neither in the Grecian seas, to the sea-king, nor on Niflung's Heath, to you, have I yielded ingloriously."

The Lord of Montfaucon assented cordially, and heartily and solemnly was reconciliation made. Then Jarl Eric addressed Gabrielle with so noble a grace that with a smile of wonder she gazed on the gigantic grey hero, and gave him her beautiful hand to kiss.

Meanwhile Sintram was speaking earnestly to his good Rolf; and at length he was heard to say: "But before all, be sure that you bury that wonderfully brave knight whom my battle-axe smote. Choose out the greenest hill for his resting place, and the loftiest oak to shade his grave. Also, I wish you to open his visor and to examine his countenance carefully, that so, though mortally smitten, we may not bury him alive; and, moreover, that you may be able to describe to me him to whom I owe the noblest prize of victory."

Rolf bowed readily and went.

"Our young knight is speaking there of one amongst the slain of whom I should like to hear more," said Folko, turning to Jarl Eric. "Who, dear Jarl, was that wonderful chieftain who led on your troops so skillfully, and who at last fell under Sintram's powerful battle-axe?"

"You ask me more than I know how to answer," replied Jarl Eric. "About three nights ago this stranger made his appearance amongst us. I was sitting with my chieftains and warriors around the hearth, forging our armor, and singing the while. Suddenly above the din of our hammering and our singing, we heard so loud a noise that it silenced us in a moment, and we sat motionless as if we had been turned into stone. Before long the sound was repeated, and at last we made out that it must be caused by some person blowing a huge horn outside the castle, seeking for admittance. I went down myself to the gate, and as I passed through the court yard all my dogs were so terrified by the extraordinary noise as to be howling and crouching in their kennels instead of barking. I chid them, and called to them, but even the fiercest would not follow me. Then, thought I, I must show you the way to set to work; so I grasped my sword firmly, I set my torch on the ground close beside me, and I let the gates fly open without further delay. For I well knew that it would be no easy matter for any one to come in against my will. A loud laugh greeted me, and I heard these words: 'Well, well, what mighty preparations are these before one small man can find the shelter he seeks!' And in truth I did feel myself redden with shame when I saw the small stranger standing opposite to me quite alone. I called to him to come in at once, and offered my hand to him; but he still showed some displeasure, and would not give

me his in return. As he went up, however, he became more friendly,—he showed me the golden horn on which he sounded that blast, and which he carried screwed on his helmet, as well as another exactly like it. When he was sitting with us in the hall, he behaved in a very strange manner; sometimes he was merry, sometimes cross, by turns courteous and rude in his demeanor, without any one being able to see a motive for such constant changes. I longed to know where he came from; but how could I ask my guest such a question? He told us as much as this, that he was starved with cold in our country, and that his own was much warmer. Also he appeared well acquainted with the city of Constantinople, and related fearful stories of how brothers, uncles, and nephews, nay, even fathers and sons, thrust each other from the throne, blinded, cut out tongues, and murdered. At length he said his own name;—it sounded harmonious, like a Greek name, but none of us could remember it. Before long he displayed his skill as an armorer. He understood marvellously well how to handle the red-hot iron, and how to form it into more murderous weapons than any I had ever before seen. I would not suffer him to go on making them, for I was resolved to meet you in the field with equal arms, and such as we are all used to in our northern countries. Then he laughed, and said he thought it would be quite possible to be victorious without them, by skillful movements and the like; if only I would entrust the command of my infantry to

him I was sure of victory. Then I thought that he who makes arms well, must also wield them well; yet I required some proof of his powers. Ye lords, he came off victorious in trials of strength such as you can hardly imagine; and although the fame of young Sintram, as a bold and brave warrior, is spread far and wide, yet I can scarce believe that he could slay such an one as my Greek ally."

He would have continued speaking, but the good Rolf came hastily back with a few followers, the whole party so ghastly pale that all eyes were involuntarily fixed on them, and looked anxiously to hear what tidings they brought. Rolf stood still, silent and trembling.

"Take courage, my old friend!" cried Sintram. "Whatever thou mayest have to tell is truth and light from thy faithful mouth."

"My dear master," began the old man, "be not angry, but as to burying that strange warrior whom you slew, it is a thing impossible. Would that we had never opened that wide hideous visor! For so horrible a countenance grinned at us from underneath it, so distorted by death, and with so hellish an expression that we hardly kept our senses. We could not by any possibility have touched him. I would rather be sent to kill wolves and bears in the desert, and look on whilst fierce birds of prey feast on their carcasses."

All present shuddered, and were silent for a time, till Sintram nerved himself to say: "Dear good old man, why use such wild words as I never till now heard thee utter? But tell me,

Jarl Eric, did your ally appear altogether so awful while he was yet alive?"

"Not as far as I know," answered Jarl Eric, looking inquiringly at his companions, who were standing around. They said the same thing; but on further questioning, it appeared that neither the chieftain, nor the knights, nor the soldiers could say exactly what the stranger was like.

"We must then find it out for ourselves, and bury the corpse," said Sintram; and he signed to the assembled party to follow him. All did so except the Lord of Montfaucon, whom the whispered entreaty of Gabrielle kept at her side. He lost nothing thereby. For though Niflung's Heath was searched from one end to the other many times, yet the body of the unknown warrior was no longer to be found.

CHAPTER XI.

THE joyful calm which came over Sintram on this day appeared to be more than a passing gleam. If too, at times, a thought of the knight Paris and Helen would inflame his heart with bolder and wilder wishes, it needed but one look at his scarf and sword, and the stream of his inner life glided again clear as a mirror, and serene within. "What can any man wish for more than has been already bestowed on me?" would he say to himself at

such times, in still delight. And thus it went on for a long while.

The beautiful northern autumn had already begun to redden the leaves of the oaks and elms around the castle, when one day it chanced that Sintram was sitting in company with Folko and Gabrielle in almost the very same spot in the garden where he had before met that mysterious being whom, without knowing why, he had named the Little Master. But on this day how different did everything appear! The sun was sinking slowly over the sea, the mist of an autumnal evening was rising from the fields and meadows around, towards the hill on which stood the huge castle. Gabrielle, placing her lute in Sintram's hands, said to him: "Dear friend, so mild and gentle as you now are, I may well dare to entrust to you my tender little darling. Let me again hear you sing that lay of the land of flowers; for I am sure that it will now sound much sweeter than when you accompanied it with the vibrations of your fearful harp."

The young knight bowed as he prepared to obey the lady's commands. With a grace and softness hitherto unwonted the tones resounded from his lips, and the wild song appeared to transform itself, and to bloom into a garden of the blessed. Tears stood in Gabrielle's eyes; and Sintram, as he gazed on the pearly brightness, poured forth tones of yet richer sweetness. When the last notes were sounded, Gabrielle's angelic voice was heard to echo them; and as she repeated

"Sing heigh, sing ho, for that land of flowers,"

Sintram put down the lute, and sighed with a thankful glance towards the stars, now rising in the heavens. Then Gabrielle, turning towards her lord, murmured these words: "Oh, how long have we been far away from our own shining castles and bright gardens! Oh, for that land of the sweetest flowers!"

Sintram could scarce believe that he heard aright, so suddenly did he feel himself as if shut out from paradise. But his last hope vanished before the courteous assurances of Folko, that he would endeavor to fulfill his lady's wishes the very next week, and that their ship was lying off the shore ready to put to sea. She thanked him with a kiss imprinted softly on his forehead; and leaning on his arm, she bent her steps, singing and smiling, towards the castle.

Sintram, troubled in mind, as though turned into stone, remained behind forgotten. At length, when night was now in the sky, he started up wildly, ran up and down the garden, as if all his former madness had again taken possession of him; and then rushed out and wandered upon the wild moonlit hills. There he dashed his sword against the trees and bushes, so that on all sides was heard a sound of crashing and falling. The birds of night flew about him screeching in wild alarm; and the deer, startled by the noise, sprang away and took refuge in the thickest coverts.

On a sudden old Rolf appeared, returning home from a visit to the chaplain of Drontheim,

to whom he had been relating, with tears of joy, how Sintram was softened by the presence of the angel Gabrielle, yea, almost healed, and how he dared to hope that the evil dreams had yielded. And now the sword, as it whizzed round the furious youth, had well nigh wounded the good old man. He stopped short, and clasping his hands, he said, with a deep sigh: "Alas, Sintram! my foster child, darling of my heart, what has come over thee, thus fearfully stirring thee to rage?"

The youth stood awhile as if spell-bound; he looked in his old friend's face with a fixed and melancholy gaze, and his eyes became dim, like expiring watch fires seen through a thick cloud of mist. At length he sighed forth these words, almost inaudibly: "Good Rolf, good Rolf, depart from me! thy garden of heaven is no home for me; and if sometimes a light breeze blow open its golden gates, so that I can look in and see the flowery meadow land where the dear angels dwell, then straightway between them and me come the cold north wind and the icy storm, and the sounding doors fly together, and I remain without, lonely, in endless winter."

"Beloved young knight, oh, listen to me,—listen to the good angel within you! Do you not bear in your hand that very sword with which the pure lady girded you? does not her scarf wave over your raging breast? Do you not recollect how you used to say, that no man could wish for more than had fallen to you?"

"Yes, Rolf, I have said that," replied Sin-

tram, sinking on the mossy turf, bitterly weeping. Tears also ran over the old man's white beard. Before long the youth stood again erect, his tears ceased to flow, his looks were fearful, cold, and grim; and he said: "You see, Rolf, I have passed blessed peaceful days, and I thought that the powers of evil would never again have dominion over me. So, perchance, it might have been, as day would ever be did the sun ever stand in the sky. But ask the poor benighted earth wherefore she looks so dark! Bid her again smile as she was wont to do. Old man, she cannot smile: and now that the gentle compassionate moon has disappeared behind the clouds with her holy funeral veil, she cannot even weep. And in this hour of darkness, all that is wild and mad wakes up. So, stop me not, I tell thee, stop me not! Hurrah, behind, behind the pale moon!" His voice changed to a hoarse murmur at these last words, stormlike. He tore away from the trembling old man, and rushed through the forest. Rolf knelt down and prayed, and wept silently.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE the sea beach was wildest, and the cliffs most steep and rugged, and close by the remains of three shattered oaks, haply marking where, in heathen times, human victims had been sacrificed, now stood Sintram,

leaning, as if exhausted, on his drawn sword, and gazing intently on the dancing waves. The moon had again shone forth: and as her pale beams fell on his motionless figure through the quivering branches of the trees, he might have been taken for some fearful idol image. Suddenly some one on the left half raised himself out of the high withered grass, uttered a faint groan, and again lay down. Then between the two companions began this strange talk: —

"Thou that movest thyself so strangely in the grass, dost thou belong to the living or to the dead?"

"As one may take it. I am dead to Heaven and joy; I live for hell and anguish."

"Methinks that I have heard thee before."

"Oh, yes."

"Art thou a troubled spirit? and was thy life blood poured out here of old in sacrifice to idols?"

"I am a troubled spirit; but no man ever has, or ever can, shed my blood. I have been cast down — oh, into a frightful abyss!"

"And didst thou there break thy neck?"

"I live,— and shall live longer than thou."

"Almost thou seemest to me the crazy pilgrim with the dead men's bones."

"I am not he, though often we are companions,—ay, walk together right near and friendly. But to you be it said, he thinks me mad. If sometimes I urge him, and say to him, 'Take!' then he hesitates, and points upwards towards the stars. And again, if I say, 'Take not!' then, to a certainty, he seizes on it in some

awkward manner, and so he spoils my best joys and pleasures. But, in spite of this, we remain in some measure brothers in arms, and, indeed, all but kinsmen."

"Give me hold of thy hand, and let me help thee to get up."

"Ho, ho! my active young sir, that might bring you no good. Yet, in fact, you have already helped to raise me. Give heed awhile."

Wilder and ever wilder were the strugglings on the ground; thick clouds hurried over the moon and the stars, on a long unknown wild journey; and Sintram's thoughts grew no less wild and stormy, while far and near an awful howling could be heard amidst the trees and the grass. At length the mysterious being arose from the ground. As if with a fearful curiosity, the moon through a rent in the clouds cast a beam upon Sintram's companion, and made clear to the shuddering youth that the little Master stood by him.

"Avaunt," cried he, "I will listen no more to thy evil stories about the knight Paris,—they would end by driving me quite mad."

"My stories about Paris are not needed for that!" grinned the little Master. "It is enough that the Helen of thy heart should be journeying towards Montfaucon. Believe me, madness has thee already, head and heart. Or wouldst thou that she should remain? For that, however, thou must be more courteous to me than thou art now."

Therewith he raised his voice towards the sea, as if fiercely rebuking it, so that Sintram

could not but shudder and tremble before the dwarf. But he checked himself, and, grasping his sword hilt with both hands, he said contemptuously: "Thou and Gabrielle! what acquaintance hast thou with Gabrielle?"

"Not much," was the reply. And the little Master might be seen to quake with fear and rage as he continued: "I cannot well bear the name of thy Helen: do not din it in my ears ten times in a breath. But if the tempest should increase? If the waves should swell, and roll on till they form a foaming ring around the whole coast of Norway? The voyage to Montfaucon must in that case be altogether given up, and thy Helen would remain here, at least through the long, long, dark winter."

"If, if!" replied Sintram with scorn. "Is the sea thy bond slave? Are the storms thy fellow workmen?"

"They are rebels, accursed rebels," muttered the little Master in his red beard. "Thou must lend me thy aid, sir knight, if I am to subdue them; but thou hast not the heart for it."

"Boaster, evil boaster!" answered the youth; "what dost thou ask of me?"

"Not much, sir knight; nothing at all for one who has strength and ardor of soul. Thou needest only look at the sea steadily and keenly for one half hour, without ever ceasing to wish with all thy might that it should foam and rage and swell, and never again rest till winter has laid its icy hold upon your mountains. Then winter is enough to hinder Duke Menelaus from his voyage to Montfaucon. And now give

me a lock of your black hair, which is blowing so wildly about your head, like ravens' or vultures' wings."

The youth drew his sharp dagger, madly cut off a lock of his hair, threw it to the strange being, and now gazed, as he desired, powerfully wishing, on the waves of the sea. And softly, quite softly, did the waters stir themselves, as one whispers in troubled dreams who would gladly rest and cannot. Sintram was on the point of giving up when in the moonbeams a ship appeared, with white swelling sails, towards the south. Anguish came over him that Gabrielle would soon thus quickly sail away. He wished again with all his power, and fixed his eyes intently on the watery abyss. "Sintram," a voice might have said to him; "ah, Sintram, art thou indeed the same who so lately wert gazing on the moistened heaven of the eyes of Gabrielle?"

And now the waves heaved more mightily, and the howling tempest swept over the ocean: the breakers, white with foam, became visible in the moonlight. Then the little Master threw the lock of Sintram's hair up towards the clouds, and, as it was blown to and fro by the blast of wind, the storm burst in all its fury, so that sea and sky were covered with one thick cloud; and far off might be heard the cries of distress from many a sinking vessel.

But the crazy pilgrim with the dead men's bones rose up in the midst of the waves, close to the shore, gigantic, tall, fearfully rocking; the boat in which he stood was hidden from

sight, so mightily raged the waves around about it.

"Thou must save him, little Master,—thou must certainly save him," cried Sintram's voice, angrily entreating, through the roaring of the winds and waves. But the dwarf replied, with a laugh: "Be quite at rest for him; he will be able to save himself. The waves can do him no harm. Seest thou? They are only begging of him, and therefore they jump up so boldly around him; and he gives them bountiful alms, —very bountiful, that I can assure thee."

In fact, as it seemed, the pilgrim threw some bones into the sea, and passed scathless on his way. Sintram felt his blood run cold with horror, and he rushed wildly towards the castle. His companion had either fled or vanished away.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the castle Biorn and Gabrielle and Folko of Montfaucon were sitting around the great stone table from which, since the arrival of his noble guests, those suits of armor had been removed, formerly the established companions of the lord of the castle, and placed altogether in a heap in the adjoining room. At this time, while the storm was beating so furiously against doors and windows, it seemed as if the ancient armor were also stirring in the next room, and Gabrielle several times half

rose from her seat in great alarm, fixing her eyes on the small iron door, as though she expected to see an armed spectre issue therefrom, bending with his mighty helmet through the low vaulted doorway.

The knight Biorn smiled grimly and said, as if he had guessed her thoughts: "Oh, he will never again come out thence; I have put an end to that for ever."

His guests stared at him doubtingly; and with a strange air of unconcern, as though the storm had awakened all the fierceness of his soul, he began the following history: —

"I was once a happy man myself; I could smile, as you do, and I could rejoice in the morning as you do; that was before the hypocritical chaplain had so bewildered the wise mind of my lovely wife with his canting talk that she went into a cloister and left me alone with our wild boy. That was not fair usage from the fair Verena. Well, so it was, that in the first days of her dawning beauty, before I knew her, many knights sought her hand, amongst whom was Sir Weigand the Slender; and towards him the gentle maiden showed herself the most favorably inclined. Her parents were well aware that Weigand's rank and station were little below their own, and that his early fame as a warrior without reproach stood high; so that before long Verena and he were accounted as affianced. It happened one day that they were walking together in the orchard, when a shepherd was driving his flock up the mountain beyond. The maiden saw a

little snow-white lamb frolicking gaily, and longed for it. Weigand vaults over the railings, overtakes the shepherd, and offers him two gold bracelets for the lamb. But the shepherd will not part with it, and scarcely listens to the knight, going quietly the while up the mountain side, with Weigand close upon him. At last Weigand loses patience. He threatens, and the shepherd, sturdy and proud like all of his race in our northern land, threatens in return. Suddenly Weigand's sword resounds upon his head,—the stroke should have fallen flat, but who can control a fiery horse or a drawn sword? The bleeding shepherd with a cloven skull, falls down the precipice; his frightened flock bleats on the mountain. Only the little lamb runs in its terror to the orchard, pushes itself through the garden rails and lies at Verena's feet, as if asking for help, all red with his master's blood. She took it up in her arms, and from that moment never suffered Weigand the Slender to appear again before her face. She continued to cherish the little lamb, and seemed to take pleasure in nothing else in the world, and became pale and turned towards heaven as the lilies are. She would soon have taken the veil, but just then I came to aid her father in a bloody war, and rescued him from his enemies. The old man represented this to her, and softly smiling she gave me her lovely hand. His grief would not suffer the unhappy Weigand to remain in his own country. It drove him forth as a pilgrim to Asia, whence our forefathers came, and there

he did wonderful deeds, both of valor und self-abasement. Truly my heart was strangely weak when I heard him spoken of at that time. After some years he returned, and wished to build a church or monastery on that mountain towards the west, whence the walls of my castle are distinctly seen. It was said that he wished to become a priest there, but it fell out otherwise. For some pirates had sailed from the southern seas, and, hearing of the building of this monastery, their chief thought to find much gold belonging to the lord of the castle and to the master builders, or else, if he surprised and carried them off, to extort from them a mighty ransom. He did not yet know northern courage and northern weapons; but he soon gained that knowledge. Having landed in the creek under the black rocks, he made his way through a by-path up to the building, surrounded it, and thought in himself that the affair was now ended. Ha! then out rushed Weigand and his builders, and fell upon them with swords and hatchets and hammers. The heathens fled away to their ships, with Weigand behind to take vengeance on them. In passing by our castle he caught a sight of Verena on the terrace, and, for the first time during so many years, she bestowed a courteous and kind salutation on the glowing victor. At that moment a dagger, hurled by one of the pirates in the midst of his hasty flight, struck Weigand's uncovered head, and he fell to the ground bleeding and insensible. We completed the rout of the heathens; then I had the

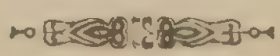
wounded knight brought into the castle; and my pale Verena glowed as lilies in the light of the morning sun; and Weigand opened his eyes with a smile when he was brought near her. He refused to be taken into any room but the small one close to this where the armor is now placed; for he said that he felt as if it were a cell like that which he hoped soon to inhabit in his quiet cloister. All was done after his wish. My sweet Verena nursed him; and he appeared at first to be on the straightest road to recovery; but his head continued weak and liable to be confused by the slightest emotion. His walk was rather a falling than a walking, and his cheeks were colorless. We could not let him go. When we were sitting here together in the evening, he used always to come tottering into the hall through the low doorway; and my heart was sad and wrathful too when the soft eyes of Verena beamed so sweetly on him, and a glow like that of the evening sky hovered over her lily cheeks. But I bore it, and I could have borne it to the end of our lives,—when, alas! Verena went into a cloister!"

His head fell so heavily on his folded hands that the stone table seemed to groan beneath it, and he remained a long while motionless as a corpse. When he again raised himself up, his eyes glared fearfully as he looked around the hall, and he said to Folko: "Your beloved Hamburghers, Gotthard Lentz and Rudlieb his son, they have much to answer for! Who bid them come and be shipwrecked so close to my castle?"

Folko cast a piercing look on him, and a fearful inquiry was on the point of escaping his lips, but another look at the trembling Gabrielle made him silent, at least for the present moment, and the knight Biorn continued his narrative.

"Verena was with her nuns, I was left alone, and my despair had driven me throughout the day through forest and brook and mountain. In the twilight I returned to my deserted castle, and scarcely was I in the hall, when the little door creaked, and Weigand, who had slept through all, crept towards me and asked: 'Where can Verena be?' Then I became as mad, and howled to him: 'She is gone mad, and so am I, and you also, and now we are all mad!' Merciful heaven, the wound on his head burst open, and a dark stream flowed over his face, — ah! how different from the redness when Verena met him at the castle gate; and he rushed forth, raving mad, into the wilderness without, and ever since has wandered all around as a crazy pilgrim."

He was silent, and so were Folko and Gabrielle, all three pale and cold like images of the dead. At length the fearful narrator added in a low voice, and as if he were quite exhausted: "He has visited me since that time, but he will never again come through the little door. Have I not established peace and order in my castle?"



CHAPTER XIV.

SINTRAM had not returned home when those of the castle betook themselves to rest in deep bewilderment. No one thought of him, for every heart was filled with strange forebodings, and with uncertain cares. Even the heroic breast of the knight of Montfaucon heaved in doubt.

Old Rolf still remained without, weeping in the forest, heedless of the storm which beat on his unprotected head, while he waited for his young master. But he had gone a very different way; and when the morning dawned, he entered the castle from the opposite side.

Gabrielle's slumbers had been sweet during the whole night. It had seemed to her that angels with golden wings had blown away the wild histories of the evening before, and had wafted to her the bright flowers, the sparkling sea, and the green hills of her own home. She smiled, and drew her breath calmly and softly, whilst the magical tempest raged and howled through the forests, and continued to battle with the troubled sea. But in truth when she awoke in the morning, and heard still the rattling of the windows, and saw the clouds, as if dissolved in mist and steam, still hiding the face of the heavens, she could have wept for

anxiety and sadness, especially when she heard from her maidens that Folko had already left their apartment clad in full armor as if prepared for a combat. At the same time she heard the sound of the heavy tread of armed men in the echoing halls, and, on inquiring, found that the knight of Montfaucon had assembled all his retainers to be in readiness to protect their lady.

Wrapped in a cloak of ermine, she stood trembling like a tender flower just sprung up out of the snow, tottering beneath a winter's storm. Then Sir Folko entered the room, in all his shining armor, and peacefully carrying his golden helmet with the long shadowy plumes in his hand. He saluted Gabrielle with cheerful serenity, and at a sign from him her attendants retired, while the men-at-arms without were heard quietly dispersing.

"Lady," said he, as he took his seat beside her, on a couch to which he led her, already reassured by his presence; "lady, will you forgive your knight for having left you to endure some moments of anxiety; but honor and stern justice called him. Now all is set in order, quietly and peacefully; dismiss your fears and every thought that has troubled you, as things which are no more."

"But you and Biorn?" asked Gabrielle.

"On the word of a knight," replied he, "all is well there." And thereupon he began to talk over indifferent subjects with his usual ease and wit; but Gabrielle, bending towards him, said with deep emotion: —

"O Folko, my knight, the flower of my life, my protector and my dearest hope on earth, tell me all, if thou mayest. But if a promise binds thee, it is different. Thou knowest that I am of the race of Portamour, and I would ask nothing from my knight which would cast even a breath of suspicion on his spotless shield."

Folko thought gravely for one instant; then looking at her with a bright smile, he said: "It is not that, Gabrielle; but canst thou bear what I have to disclose? Wilt thou not sink down under it, as a slender fir gives way under a mass of snow?"

She raised herself somewhat proudly, and said: "I have already reminded thee of the name of my father's house. Let me now add that I am the wedded wife of the Baron of Montfaucon."

"Then so let it be," replied Folko solemnly; "and if that must come forth openly which should ever have remained hidden in the darkness which belongs to such deeds of wickedness, at least let it come forth less fearfully with a sudden flash. Know then, Gabrielle, that the wicked knight who would have slain my friends Gotthard and Rudlieb is none other than our kinsman and host, Biorn of the Fiery Eyes."

Gabrielle shuddered and covered her eyes with her fair hands; but at the end of a moment she looked up with a bewildered air and said: "I have heard wrong surely, although it is true that yesterday evening such a thought struck

me. For did not you say a while ago that all was settled and at peace between you and Biorn? Between the brave baron and such a man after such a crime?"

"You heard aright," answered Folko, looking with fond delight on the delicate yet high-minded lady. "This morning with the earliest dawn I went to him and challenged him to a mortal combat in the neighboring valley, if he were the man whose castle had well nigh become an altar of sacrifice to Gotthard and Rudlieb. He was already completely armed, and merely saying: 'I am he,' he followed me to the forest. But when we stood alone at the place of combat, he flung away his shield down a giddy precipice, then his sword was hurled after it, and next with gigantic strength he tore off his coat of mail, and said: 'Now fall on, thou minister of vengeance; for I am a heavy sinner, and I dare not fight with thee.' How could I then attack him? A strange truce was agreed on between us. He is half as my vassal, and yet I solemnly forgave him in my own name and in that of my friends. He was contrite, and yet no tear was in his eye, no gentle word on his lips. He is only kept under by the power with which I am endued by having right on my side, and it is on that tenure that Biorn is my vassal. I know not, lady, whether you can bear to see us together on these terms; if not, I will ask for hospitality in some other castle; there are none in Norway which would not receive us joyfully and honorably, and this wild autumnal storm may put off our voyage

for many a day. Only this I think, that if we depart directly and in such a manner, the heart of this savage man will break."

"Where my noble lord remains, there I also remain joyfully under his protection," replied Gabrielle; and again her heart glowed with rapture at the greatness of her knight.

CHAPTER XV.

THE noble lady had just unbuckled her knight's armor with her own fair hands, —on the field of battle alone were pages or esquires bidden handle Montfaucon's armor,— and now she was throwing over his shoulders his mantle of blue velvet embroidered with gold, when the door opened gently, and Sintram entered the room, humbly greeting them. Gabrielle received him kindly, as she was wont, but suddenly turning pale, she looked away and said:

"O Sintram, what has happened to you? And how can one single night have so fearfully altered you?"

Sintram stood still thunderstruck, and feeling as if he himself did not know what had befallen him. Then Folko took him by the hand, led him towards a bright polished shield, and said very earnestly: "Look here at yourself, young knight!"

At the first glance Sintram drew back horri-

fied. He fancied that he saw the little Master before him with that single upright feather sticking out of his cap; but he at length perceived that the mirror was only showing him his own image and none other, and that his own wild dagger had given him this strange and spectre-like aspect, as he could not deny to himself.

"Who has done that to you?" asked Folko, yet more grave and solemn. "And what terror makes your disordered hair stand on end?"

Sintram knew not what to answer. He felt as if a judgment were coming on him, and a shameful degrading from his knightly rank. Suddenly Folko drew him away from the shield, and taking him towards the rattling window, he asked: "Whence comes this tempest?"

Still Sintram kept silence. His limbs began to tremble under him, and Gabrielle, pale and terrified, whispered: "O Folko, my knight, what has happened? Oh, tell me, are we come into an enchanted castle?"

"The land of our northern ancestors," replied Folko with solemnity, "is full of mysterious knowledge. But we may not, for all that, call its people enchanters; still this youth has cause to watch himself narrowly; he whom the evil one has touched by so much as one hair of his head —"

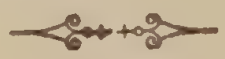
Sintram heard no more; with a deep groan he staggered out of the room. As he left it he met old Rolf, still almost benumbed by the cold and storms of the night. Now, in his joy at again seeing his young master, he did not

remark his altered appearance; but as he accompanied him to his sleeping room he said: "Witches and spirits of the tempest must have taken up their abode on the sea shore. I am certain that such wild storms never arise without some devilish arts."

Sintram fell into a fainting fit from which Rolf could with difficulty recover him sufficiently to appear in the great hall at the midday hour. But before he went down, he caused a shield to be brought, saw himself therein, and cut close around, in grief and horror, the rest of his long black hair, so that he made himself look almost like a monk; and thus he joined the others already assembled around the table. They all looked at him with surprise; but old Biorn rose up and said fiercely: "Are you going to betake yourself to a cloister, as well as the fair lady your mother?"

A commanding look from the Baron of Montfaucon checked any further outbreak; and as if in apology, Biorn added, with a forced smile: "I was only thinking if any accident had befallen him, like Absalom's, and if he had been obliged to save himself from being strangled by parting with all his hair."

"You should not jest with holy things," answered the Baron severely, and all were silent. No sooner was the repast ended than Folko and Gabrielle, with a grave and courteous salutation, retired to their apartments.



CHAPTER XVI.

LIFE in the castle took from this time quite another form. Those two bright beings, Folko and Gabrielle, spent most part of the day in their apartments, and when they showed themselves it was with quiet dignity and grave silence, while Biorn and Sintram stood before them in humble fear. Nevertheless Biorn could not bear the thought of his guests seeking shelter in any other knight's abode. When Folko once spoke of it, something like a tear stood in the wild man's eye. His head sank, and he said softly: "As you please, but I feel that if you go, I shall run among the rocks for days."

And thus they all remained together, for the storm continued to rage with such increasing fury over the sea that no sea voyage could be thought of, and the oldest man in Norway could not call to mind such an autumn. The priests examined all the Runic books, the bards looked through their lays and tales, and yet they could find no record of the like. Biorn and Sintram braved the tempest; but during the few hours in which Folko and Gabrielle showed themselves, the father and son were always in the castle, as if respectfully waiting upon them; the rest of the day, — nay, often through whole

nights, they rushed through the forests and over the rocks in pursuit of bears. Folko the while called up all the brightness of his fancy, all his courtly grace, in order to make Gabrielle forget that she was living in this wild castle, and that the long, hard northern winter was setting in, which would ice them in for many a month. Sometimes he would relate bright tales; then he would play the liveliest airs to induce Gabrielle to lead a dance with her attendants; then, again, handing his lute to one of the women, he would himself take a part in the dance, well knowing to express thereby after some new fashion his devotion to his lady. Another time he would have the spacious halls of the castle prepared for his armed retainers to go through their warlike exercises, and Gabrielle always adjudged the reward to the conqueror. Folko often joined the circle of combatants; yet so that he only met their attacks, defending himself but depriving no one of the prize. The Norwegians, who stood round as spectators, used to compare him to the demigod Baldur, one of the heroes of their old traditions, who was wont to let the darts of his companions be all hurled against him, conscious that he was invulnerable, and of his own indwelling strength.

At the close of one of these martial exercises, old Rolf advanced towards Folko, and beckoning him with an humble look, said softly: "They call you the beautiful, mighty Baldur, —and they are right. But even the beautiful, mighty Baldur did not escape death. Take

heed to yourself." Folko looked at him wondering. "Not that I know of any treachery," continued the old man; "or that I can even foresee the likelihood of any. God keep a Norwegian from such a fear. But when you stand before me in all the brightness of your glory, the fleetingness of every thing earthly weighs down my mind, and I cannot refrain from saying: 'Take heed, noble baron! oh, take heed! Even the most beautiful glory comes to an end.'"

"Those are wise and pious thoughts," replied Folko calmly, "and I will treasure them in a pure heart."

The good Rolf was often with Folko and Gabrielle, and made a connecting link between the two widely differing parties in the castle. For how could he have ever forsaken his own Sintram! Only in the wild hunting expeditions through the howling storms and tempests he no longer was able to follow his young lord.

At length the icy reign of winter began in all its glory. On this account a return to Normandy was impossible, and therefore the magical storm was lulled. The hills and valleys shone brilliantly in their white attire of snow, and Folko used sometimes, with skates on his feet, to draw his lady in a light sledge over the glittering frozen lakes and streams. On the other hand, the bear-hunts of the lord of the castle and his son took a still more desperate and to them joyous course.

About this time,— when Christmas was drawing near, and Sintram was seeking to over-

power his dread of the awful dreams by the most daring expeditions, — about this time, Folko and Gabrielle stood together on one of the terraces of the castle. The evening was mild; the snow-clad fields were glowing in the red light of the setting sun; from below there were heard men's voices singing songs of ancient heroic times, while they worked in the armorer's forge. At last the songs died away, the beating of hammers ceased, and, without the speakers being seen, or there being any possibility of distinguishing them by their voices, the following discourse arose: —

"Who is the bravest amongst all those whose race derives its origin from our renowned land?"

"It is Folko of Montfaucon."

"Rightly said; but tell me, is there any thing from which even this bold baron draws back?"

"In truth there is one thing,— and we who have never left Norway face it quite willingly and joyfully."

"And that is ——?"

"A bear hunt in winter, over trackless plains of snow, down frightful ice-covered precipices."

"Truly thou answerest aright, my comrade. He who knows not how to fasten our skates on his feet, how to turn in them to the right or left at a moment's warning, he may be a valiant knight in other respects, but he had better keep away from our hunting parties, and remain with his timid wife in her apartments." At which the speakers were heard to laugh well pleased, and then to betake themselves again to their armorers' work.

Folko stood long buried in thought. A glow beyond that of the evening sky reddened his cheek. Gabrielle also remained silent, considering she knew not what. At last she took courage, and embracing her beloved, she said: "Tomorrow thou wilt go forth to hunt the bear, wilt thou not? and thou wilt bring the spoils of the chase to thy lady?"

The knight gave a joyful sign of assent; and the rest of the evening was spent in dances and music.

CHAPTER XVII.

"SEE, my noble lord," said Sintram the next morning, when Folko had expressed his wish of going out with him, "these skates of ours give such wings to our course that we go down the mountain side swiftly as the wind; and even in going up again we are too quick for any one to be able to pursue us, and on the plains no horse can keep up with us; and yet they can only be worn with safety by those who are well practised. It seems as though some strange spirit dwelt in them, which is fearfully dangerous to any that have not learnt the management of them in their childhood."

Folko answered somewhat proudly: "Do you suppose that this is the first time that I have been amongst your mountains? Years ago I have joined in this sport, and, thank Heaven, there is no knightly exercise which does not speedily become familiar to me."

Sintram did not venture to make any further objections, and still less did old Biorn. They both felt relieved when they saw with what skill and ease Folko buckled the skates on his feet, without suffering any one to assist him. This day they hunted up the mountain in pursuit of a fierce bear which had often before escaped from them. Before long it was necessary that they should separate, and Sintram offered himself as a companion to Folko, who, touched by the humble manner of the youth, and his devotion to him, forgot all that had latterly seemed mysterious in the pale altered being before him, and agreed heartily. As now they continued to climb higher and higher up the mountain, and saw from many a giddy height the rocks and crags below them looking like a vast expanse of sea suddenly turned into ice whilst tossed by a violent tempest, the noble Montfaucon drew his breath more freely. He poured forth war-songs and love-songs in the clear mountain air, and the startled echoes repeated from rock to rock the lays of his Frankish home. He sprang lightly from one precipice to another, using strongly and safely his staff for support, and turning now to the right, now to the left, as the fancy seized him; so that Sintram was fain to exchange his former anxiety for a wondering admiration, and the hunters, whose eyes had never been taken off the baron, burst forth with loud applause, proclaiming far and wide the fresh glory of their guest.

The good fortune which usually accompanied

Folko's deeds of arms seemed still unwilling to leave him. After a short search, he and Sintram found distinct traces of the savage animal, and with beating hearts they followed the track so swiftly, that even a winged enemy would have been unable to escape from them. But the creature whom they sought did not attempt a flight,—he lay sulkily in a cavern near the top of a steep precipitous rock, infuriated by the shouts of the hunters, and only waiting in his lazy fury for some one to be bold enough to climb up to his retreat that he might tear him to pieces. Folko and Sintram had now reached the foot of this rock, the rest of the hunters being dispersed over the far-extending plain. The track led the two companions up the rock, and they set about climbing on the opposite sides of it, that they might be the more sure of not missing their prey. Folko reached the lonely topmost point first, and cast his eyes around. A wide, boundless tract of country, covered with untrodden snow, was spread before him, melting in the distance into the lowering clouds of the gloomy evening sky. He almost thought that he must have missed the traces of the fearful beast, when close beside him from a cleft in the rock issued a long growl, and a huge black bear appeared on the snow, standing on its hind legs, and with glaring eyes it advanced towards the baron. Sintram the while was struggling in vain to make his way up the rock against the masses of snow continually slipping down.

Joyful at a combat so long untried as almost

to be new, Folko of Montfaucon levelled his hunting spear, and awaited the attack of the wild beast. He suffered it to approach so near that its fearful claws were almost upon him; then he made a thrust, and the spear-head was buried deep in the bear's breast. But the furious beast still pressed on with a fierce growl, kept up on its hind legs by the cross-iron of the spear, and the knight was forced to plant his feet deep in the earth to resist the savage assault; and ever close before him the grim and bloody face of the bear, and close in his ear the deep savage growl, wrung forth partly by its agony of death, partly by thirst for blood. At length the bear's resistance grew weaker, and the dark blood streamed freely upon the snow. He tottered, and one powerful thrust hurled him backwards over the edge of the precipice. At the same instant Sintram stood by the Baron of Montfaucon. Folko said, drawing a deep breath: "But I have not yet the prize in my hands, and have it I must, since fortune has given me a claim to it. Look, one of my skates seems to be out of order. Thinkest thou Sintram, that it holds enough to slide down to the foot of the precipice?"

"Let me go instead," said Sintram. "I will bring you the head and the claws of the bear."

"A true knight," replied Folko with some displeasure, "never does a knightly deed by halves. What I ask is whether my skate will still hold?"

As Sintram bent down to look, and was on the point of saying "No!" he suddenly heard

a voice close to him, saying: "Why, yes, to be sure; there is no doubt about it."

Folko thought that Sintram had spoken, and slid down with the swiftness of an arrow, whilst his companion looked up in great surprise. The hated form of the little Master met his eyes. As he was going to address him with angry words, he heard the sound of the baron's fearful fall, and he stood still in silent horror. There was a breathless silence also in the abyss below.

"Now, why dost thou delay?" said the little Master, after a pause. "He is dashed to pieces. Go back to the castle, and take the fair Helen to thyself."

Sintram shuddered. Then his hateful companion began to praise Gabrielle's charms in so glowing, deceiving words that the heart of the youth swelled with emotions he had never before known. He only thought of him who was now lying at the foot of the rock as of an obstacle removed between him and heaven. He turned towards the castle.

But a cry was heard below: "Help! help! my comrade! I am yet alive, but I am sorely wounded."

Sintram's will was changed, and he called to the baron: "I am coming."

But the little Master said: "Nothing can be done to help Duke Menelaus; and the fair Helen knows it already. She is only waiting for Knight Paris to comfort her." And with detestable craft he wove in that tale with what was actually happening, bringing in the most

highly wrought praises of the lovely Gabrielle; and, alas! the dazzled youth yielded to him and fled! Again he heard far off the baron's voice calling to him: "Knight Sintram, Knight Sintram, thou on whom I bestowed the holy order, haste to me, and help me! The she bear and her whelps will be upon me, and I cannot use my right arm! Knight Sintram, Knight Sintram, haste to help me!"

His cries were overpowered by the furious speed with which the two were carried along on their skates, and by the evil words of the little Master, who was mocking at the late proud bearing of Duke Menelaus towards the poor Sintram. At last he shouted: "Good luck to you, she bear! good luck to your whelps! There is a glorious meal for you! Now you will feed upon the fear of heathendom, him at whose name the Moorish brides weep, the mighty Baron of Montfaucon. Never again, O dainty knight, will you shout at the head of your troops: 'Mountjoy St. Denys!'" But scarce had this holy name passed the lips of the little Master than he set up a howl of anguish, writhing himself with horrible contortions, and wringing his hands, and ended by disappearing in a storm of snow which then arose.

Sintram planted his staff firmly in the ground and stopped. How strangely did the wide expanse of snow, the distant mountains rising above it, and the dark green fir woods, how strangely did they all look at him in cold reproachful silence! He felt as if he must

sink under the weight of his sorrow and his guilt. The bell of a distant hermitage came floating sadly over the plain. With a burst of tears he exclaimed, as the darkness grew thicker around him: "My mother! my mother! I had once a beloved tender mother, and she said I was a good child." A ray of comfort came to him as if brought on an angel's wing; perhaps Montfaucon was not yet dead! and he flew like lightning along the path, back to the steep rock. When he got to the fearful place, he stooped and looked anxiously down the precipice. The moon, just risen in full majesty, helped him. The knight of Montfaucon, pale and bleeding, was half kneeling against the rock; his right arm, crushed in his fall, hung powerless at his side; it was plain that he could not draw his good sword out of the scabbard. But nevertheless he was keeping the bear and her young ones at bay by his bold threatening looks, so that they only crept round him, growling angrily; every moment ready for a fierce attack, but as often driven back affrighted at the majestic air by which he conquered even when defenceless.

"Oh, what a hero would there have perished!" groaned Sintram, "and through whose guilt?" In an instant his spear flew with so true an aim that the bear fell weltering in her blood; the young ones ran away howling.

The baron looked up with surprise. His countenance beamed as the light of the moon fell upon it, grave and stern, yet mild, like some angelic vision. "Come down!" he beckoned;

and Sintram slid down the side of the precipice, full of anxious haste. He was going to attend to the wounded man, but Folko said "First cut off the head and claws of the bear which I slew. I promised to bring the spoils of the chase to my lovely Gabrielle. Then come to me, and bind up my wounds. My right arm is broken." Sintram obeyed the baron's commands. When the tokens of victory had been secured, and the broken arm bound up, Folko desired the youth to help him back to the castle.

"Oh, heavens!" said Sintram in a low voice, "If I dared to look in your face! or only knew how to come near you!"

"Thou wert indeed going on in an evil course," said Montfaucon gravely; "but how could we, any of us, stand before God, did not repentance help us! At any rate, thou hast now saved my life, and let that thought cheer thy heart."

The youth with tenderness and strength supported the baron's left arm, and they both went their way silently in the moonlight.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOUNDS of wailing were heard from the castle as they approached; the chapel was solemnly lighted up; within it knelt Gabrielle, lamenting for the death of the knight of Montfaucon.

But how quickly was all changed when the noble baron, pale indeed and bleeding, yet having escaped all mortal danger, stood smiling at the entrance of the holy building, and said, in a low, gentle voice: "Look up, Gabrielle, and be not affrighted; for, by the honor of my race, thy knight still lives." Oh, with what joy did Gabrielle's eyes sparkle, as she turned to her knight, and raised them again to heaven, still streaming, but from the deep source of thankful joy! With the help of two pages, Folko knelt down beside her, and they both sanctified their happiness with a silent prayer.

When they left the chapel, the wounded knight being tenderly supported by his lady, Sintram was standing without in the darkness, himself as gloomy as the knight, and, like a bird of the night, shunning the sight of men. Yet he came trembling forward into the torch light, laid the bear's head and claws at the feet of Gabrielle, and said: "The noble Folko of Montfaucon presents the spoils of today's chase to his lady."

The Norwegians burst forth with shouts of joyful surprise at the stranger knight, who in the very first hunting expedition had slain the most fearful and dangerous beast of their mountains.

Then Folko looked around with a smile as he said: "And now none of you must jeer at me if I stay at home for a short time with my timid wife."

Those who the day before had talked together in the armorer's forge came out from

the crowd, and bowing low, they replied: "Noble baron, who could have thought that there was no knightly exercise in the whole world in the which you would not show yourself far above all other men?"

"The pupil of old Sir Hugh may be somewhat trusted," answered Folko kindly. "But now, you bold northern warriors, bestow some praises also on my deliverer, who saved me from the claws of the she bear when I was leaning against the rock wounded by my fall."

He pointed to Sintram, and the general shout was again raised; and old Rolf, with tears of joy in his eyes, bent his head over his foster-son's hand. But Sintram drew back shuddering.

"Did you but know," said he, "whom you see before you, all your spears would be aimed at my heart; and perhaps that would be the best thing for me. But I spare the honor of my father and of his race, and for this time I will not confess. Only this much must you know, noble warriors——"

"Young man," interrupted Folko with a reproving look, "already again so wild and fierce? I desire that thou wilt hold thy peace about thy dreaming fancies."

Sintram was silenced for a moment; but hardly had Folko begun smilingly to move towards the steps of the castle, than he cried out: "Oh, no, no, noble wounded knight, stay yet awhile; I will serve thee in every thing that thy heart can desire; but herein I cannot serve thee. Brave warriors, you must and shall know so much as this; I am no longer

worthy to live under the same roof with the noble baron of Montfaucon and his angelic wife Gabrielle; and you, my aged father, good night; long not for me. I intend to live in the stone fortress on the Rocks of the Moon, till a change of some kind come over me."

There was that in his way of speaking against which no one dared to set himself, not even Folko.

The wild Biorn bowed his head humbly, and said: "Do according to thy pleasure, my poor son; for I fear that thou art right."

Then Sintram walked solemnly and silently through the castle gate, followed by the good Rolf. Gabrielle led her exhausted lord up to their apartments.

CHAPTER XIX.

THAT was a mournful journey on which the youth and his aged foster father went towards the Rocks of the Moon, through the wild tangled paths of the snow-clad valleys. Rolf from time to time sang some verses of hymns, in which comfort and peace were promised to the penitent sinner, and Sintram thanked him for them with looks of grateful sadness. Neither of them spoke a word else.

At length, when the dawn of day was approaching, Sintram broke silence by saying: "Who are those two sitting yonder by the frozen stream,—a tall man and a little one?

Their own wild hearts must have driven them also forth into the wilderness. Rolf, dost thou know them? The sight of them makes me shudder."

"Sir," answered the old man, "your disturbed mind deceives you. There stands a lofty fir tree and the old weather beaten stump of an oak half covered with snow, which gives them a somewhat strange appearance. There are no men sitting yonder."

"But, Rolf, look there! look again carefully! Now they move, they whisper together."

"Sir, the morning breeze moves the branches and whistles in the sharp pine leaves and in the yellow oak leaves, and rustles the crisp snow."

"Rolf, now they are both coming towards us. Now they are standing before us, quite close."

"Sir, it is we who get nearer to them as we walk on, and the setting moon throws such long giant-like shadows over the plain."

"Good evening!" said a hollow voice; and Sintram knew it was the crazy pilgrim, near to whom stood the malignant little Master, looking more hideous than ever.

"You are right, sir knight," whispered Rolf, as he drew back behind Sintram, and made the sign of the cross on his breast and his forehead.

The bewildered youth however advanced towards the two figures and said: "You have always taken wonderful pleasure in being my companions. What do you expect will come of it? and do you choose to go now with me to the stone fortress? There I will tend thee, poor pale pilgrim; and as to thee, frightful

Master, most evil dwarf, I will make thee shorter by the head, to reward thee for thy deeds yesterday."

"That would be a fine thing," sneered the little Master, "and perhaps thou imaginest that thou wouldst be doing a great service to the whole world? And, indeed, who knows? Something might be gained by it! Only, poor wretch, thou canst not do it."

The pilgrim meantime was waving his pale head to and fro thoughtfully, saying: "I believe truly that thou wouldst willingly have me, and I would go to thee willingly, but I may not yet. Have patience awhile; thou wilt yet surely see me come, but at a distant time; and first we must again visit thy father together, and then also thou wilt learn to call me by my right name, my poor friend."

"Beware of disappointing me again!" said the little Master to the pilgrim in a threatening voice; but he, pointing with his long shrivelled hand towards the sun which was just now rising, said: "Stop either that sun or me, if thou canst!"

Then the first rays fell on the snow, and little Master ran, muttering, down a precipice; but the pilgrim walked on in the bright beams, calmly and with great solemnity, towards a neighboring castle on the mountain. It was not long before its chapel bell was heard tolling for the dead.

"For Heaven's sake," whispered the good Rolf to his knight,—"for Heaven's sake, Sir Sintram, what kind of companions have you

here? One of them cannot bear the light of God's blessed sun, and the other has no sooner set foot in a dwelling than tidings of death wail after his track. Could he have been a murderer?"

"I do not think that," said Sintram. "He seemed to me the best of the two. But it is a strange willfulness of his not to come with me. Did I not invite him kindly? I believe that he can sing well, and he should have sung to me some gentle lullaby. Since my mother has lived in a cloister, no one sings lullabies to me any more."

At this tender recollection his eyes were bedewed with tears. But he did not himself know what he had said besides, for there was wildness and confusion in his spirit. They arrived at the Rocks of the Moon, and mounted up to the stone fortress. The castellan, an old gloomy man, the more devoted to the young knight from his dark melancholy and wild deeds, hastened to lower the drawbridge. Greetings were exchanged in silence, and in silence did Sintram enter, and those joyless gates closed with a crash behind the future recluse.

CHAPTER XX.

YES, truly a recluse, or at least something like it, did poor Sintram now become! For towards the time of the approaching

Christmas festival his fearful dreams came over him, and seized him so fiercely that all the esquires and servants fled with shrieks out of the castle, and would never venture back again. No one remained with him except Rolf and the old castellan. After a while, indeed, Sintram became calm, but he went about looking so pallid and still that he might have been taken for a wandering corpse. No comforting of the good Rolf, no devout soothing lays, were of any avail; and the castellan, with his fierce, scarred features, his head almost entirely bald from a huge sword cut, his stubborn silence, seemed like a yet darker shadow of the miserable knight. Rolf often thought of going to summon the holy chaplain of Drontheim; but how could he have left his lord alone with the gloomy castellan, a man who at all times raised in him a secret horror? Biorn had long had this wild strange warrior in his service, and honored him on account of his unshaken fidelity and his fearless courage, though neither the knight nor any one else knew whence the castellan came, nor indeed exactly who he was. Very few people knew by what name to call him; but that was the more needless since he never entered into discourse with any one. He was the castellan of the stone fortress on the Rocks of the Moon, and nothing more.

Rolf committed his deep heartfelt cares to the merciful God, trusting that He would soon come to his aid; and the merciful God did not fail him. For on Christmas eve the bell at the

drawbridge sounded, and Rolf, looking over the battlements, saw the chaplain of Drontheim standing there with a companion indeed that surprised him, for close beside him appeared the crazy pilgrim, and the dead men's bones on his dark mantle shone very strangely in the glimmering starlight; but the sight of the chaplain filled the good Rolf too full of joy to leave room for any doubt in his mind; for, thought he, whoever comes with *him* cannot but be welcome. And so he let them both in with respectful haste, and ushered them up to the hall, where Sintram, pale and with a fixed look, was sitting under the light of one flickering lamp. Rolf was obliged to support and assist the crazy pilgrim up the stairs, for he was quite benumbed with cold.

"I bring you a greeting from your mother," said the chaplain as he came in; and immediately a sweet smile passed over the young knight's countenance, and its deadly pallidness gave place to a bright soft glow.

"Oh, Heaven!" murmured he, "does then my mother yet live, and does she care to know any thing about me?"

"She is endowed with a wonderful presentiment of the future," replied the chaplain; "and all that you ought either to do or to leave undone is faithfully mirrored in various ways in her mind, during a half-waking trance. Now she knows of your deep sorrow; and she sends me, the father-confessor of her convent, to comfort you, but at the same time to warn you, for, as she affirms, and as I am also inclined to

think, many strange and heavy trials lie before you."

Sintram bowed himself towards the chaplain with his arms crossed over his breast, and said, with a gentle smile: "Much have I been favored — more, a thousand times more, than I could have dared to hope in my best hours — by this greeting from my mother, and your visit, reverend sir; and all after falling more fearfully low than I had ever fallen before. The mercy of the Lord is great; and how heavy soever may be the weight and punishment which He may send, I trust with His grace, to be able to bear it."

Just then the door opened, and the castellan came in with a torch in his hand, the red glare of which made his face look the color of blood. He cast a terrified glance at the crazy pilgrim, who had just sunk back in a swoon, and was supported on his seat and tended by Rolf; then he stared with astonishment at the chaplain, and at last murmured: "A strange meeting! I believe that the hour for confession and reconciliation is now arrived."

"I believe so too," replied the priest, who had heard his low whisper; "this seems to be truly a day rich in grace and peace. That poor man yonder, whom I found half frozen by the way, would make a full confession to me at once, before he followed me to a place of shelter. Do as he has done, my dark browed warrior, and delay not your good purpose for one instant."

Thereupon he left the room with the willing

castellan, but he turned back to say: "Sir Knight, and your esquire, take good care the while of my sick charge."

Sintram and Rolf did according to the chaplain's desire; and when at length their cordials made the pilgrim open his eyes once again, the young knight said to him with a friendly smile: "Seest thou? thou art come to visit me after all. Why didst thou refuse me when, a few nights ago, I asked thee so earnestly to come? Perhaps I may have spoken wildly and hastily. Did that scare thee away?"

A sudden expression of fear came over the pilgrim's countenance; but soon he again looked up at Sintram with an air of gentle humility, saying: "O my dear, dear lord, I am most entirely devoted to you,—only never speak to me of former passages between you and me. I am terrified whenever you do it. For, my lord, either I am mad and have forgotten all that is past, or that Being has met you in the wood whom I look upon as my very powerful twin brother."

Sintram laid his hand gently on the pilgrim's mouth, as he answered: "Say nothing more about that matter; I most willingly promise to be silent."

Neither he nor old Rolf could understand what appeared to them so awful in the whole matter; but both shuddered.

After a short pause, the pilgrim said: "I would rather sing you a song,— a soft, comforting song. Have you not a lute here?"

Rolf fetched one; and the pilgrim half-rais-

ing himself on the couch, sang the following words: —

"When death is coming near,
When thy heart shrinks in fear
And thy limbs fail,
Then raise thy hands and pray
To Him who smooths thy way
Through the dark vale.

Seest thou the eastern dawn,
Hear'st thou in the red morn
The angel's song?
Oh, lift thy drooping head,
Thou who in gloom and dread
Hast lain so long.

Death comes to set thee free;
Oh, meet him cheerily
As thy true friend,
And all thy fears shall cease,
And in eternal peace
Thy penance end."

"Amen," said Sintram and Rolf, folding their hands; and whilst the last chords of the lute still resounded the chaplain and the castellan came slowly and gently into the room. "I bring a precious Christmas gift," said the priest. "After many sad years, hope of reconciliation and peace of conscience are returning to a noble, disturbed mind. This concerns thee, beloved pilgrim; and do thou, my Sintram, with a joyful trust in God, take encouragement and example from it."

"More than twenty years ago," began the castellan, at a sign from the chaplain,—"more than twenty years ago I was a bold shepherd, driving my flock up the mountains. A young knight followed me, whom they called Weigand

the Slender. He wanted to buy of me my favorite little lamb for his fair bride, and offered me much red gold for it. I sturdily refused. Over bold youth boiled up in us both. A stroke of his sword hurled me senseless down the precipice."

"Not killed?" asked the pilgrim in a scarce audible voice.

"I am no ghost," replied the castellan, somewhat morosely; and then, after an earnest look from the priest, he continued more humbly: "I recovered slowly and in solitude with the help of remedies which were easily found by me, a shepherd, in our productive valleys. When I came back into the world no man knew me, with my scarred face, and my now bald head. I heard a report going through the country that on account of this deed of his, Sir Weigand the Slender had been rejected by his fair betrothed Verena, and how he had pined away, and she had wished to retire into a convent, but her father had persuaded her to marry the great knight Biorn. Then there came a fearful thirst for vengeance into my heart, and I disowned my name, and my kindred, and my home, and entered the service of the mighty Biorn, as a strange wild man, in order that Weigand the Slender should always remain a murderer, and that I might feed on his anguish. So have I fed upon it for all these long years. I have fed frightfully upon his self imposed banishment, upon his cheerless return home, upon his madness. But today—" and hot tears gushed from his eyes—"but today

God has broken the hardness of my heart, and, dear Sir Weigand, look upon yourself no more as a murderer, and say that you will forgive me, and pray for him who has done you so fearful an injury, and—"

Sobs choked his words. He fell at the feet of the pilgrim, who with tears of joy pressed him to his heart, in token of forgiveness.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE joy of this hour passed from its first overpowering brightness to the calm and thoughtful aspect of daily life; and Weigand, now restored to health, laid aside the mantle with dead men's bones saying: "I had chosen for my penance to carry these fearful remains about with me, with the thought that some of them might have belonged to him whom I have murdered. Therefore I sought for them round about, in the deep beds of the mountain torrents, and in the high nests of the eagles and vultures. And while I was searching I sometimes—could it have been only an illusion!—seemed to meet a being who was very like myself, but far, far more powerful, and yet still paler and more haggard."

An imploring look from Sintram stopped the flow of his words. With a gentle smile Weigand bowed towards him and said: "You know now all the deep, unutterably deep, sor-

row which preyed upon me. My fear of you, and my yearning love for you, are no longer an enigma to your kind heart. For, dear youth, though you may be like your fearful father, you have also the kind, gentle heart of your mother; and its reflection brightens your pallid, stern features like the glow of a morning sky, which lights up ice-covered mountains and snowy valleys with the soft radiance of joy. But, alas! how long you have lived alone amidst your fellow creatures! And how long since you have seen your mother, my dearly loved Sintram!"

"I feel, too, as though a spring were gushing up in the barren wilderness," replied the youth; and I should perchance be altogether restored could I but keep you long with me, and weep with you, dear lord. But I have that within me which says that you will very soon be taken from me."

"I believe, indeed, said the pilgrim, "that my late song was very nearly my last, and that it contained a prediction full soon to be accomplished in me. But, as the soul of man is always like the thirsty ground, the more blessings God has bestowed on us the more earnestly do we look out for new ones; so would I crave for one more before, as I hope, my blessed end. Yet, indeed, it cannot be granted me," added he with a faltering voice, "for I feel myself too utterly unworthy of so high a gift."

"But it will be granted," said the chaplain joyfully, "'He that humbleth himself shall be

exalted'; and I fear not to take one purified from murder to receive a farewell from the holy and forgiving countenance of Verena."

The pilgrim stretched both his hands up towards Heaven, and an unspoken thanksgiving poured from his beaming eyes, and brightened the smile that played on his lips.

Sintram looked sorrowfully on the ground, and sighed gently to himself: "Alas! who would dare accompany?"

"My poor, good Sintram," said the chaplain, in a tone of the softest kindness, "I understand thee well; but the time is not yet come. The powers of evil will again raise up their wrathful heads within thee, and Verena must check both her own and thy longing desires until all is pure in thy spirit as in hers. Comfort thyself with the thought that God looks mercifully upon thee, and that the joy so earnestly sought for will come,—if not here, most assuredly beyond the grave."

But the pilgrim, as though waking out of a trance, rose mightily from his seat, and said: "Do you please to come forth with me, reverend chaplain? Before the sun appears in the heavens, we could reach the convent-gates, and I should not be far from Heaven.

In vain did the chaplain and Rolf remind him of his weakness; he smiled, and said that there could be no words about it; and he girded himself, and tuned the lute which he had asked leave to take with him. His decided manner overcame all opposition, almost without words; and the chaplain had already pre-

pared himself for the journey, when the pilgrim looked with much emotion at Sintram, who, oppressed with a strange weariness, had sunk half asleep on a couch, and said: "Wait a moment. I know that he wants me to give him a soft lullaby." The pleased smile of the youth seemed to say 'Yes'; and the pilgrim, touching the strings with a light hand, sang these words: —

"Sleep peacefully, dear boy;
  Thy mother sends the song
That whispers round thy couch,
  To lull thee all night long.
In silence and afar
  For thee she ever prays,
And longs once more in fondness
  Upon thy face to gaze.

And when thy waking cometh,
  Then in thy every deed,
In all that may betide thee,
  Unto her words give heed.
Oh, listen for her voice,
  If it be yea or nay;
And though temptation meet thee,
  Thou shalt not miss the way.

If thou canst listen rightly,
  And nobly onward go,
Then pure and gentle breezes
  Around thy cheeks shall blow.
Then on thy peaceful journey
  Her blessing thou shalt feel,
And though from thee divided,
  Her presence o'er thee steal.

O safest, sweetest comfort!
  O blest and living light!
That, strong in Heaven's power,
  All terrors puts to flight!

Rest quietly, sweet child,
And may the gentle numbers
Thy mother sends to thee
Waft peace unto thy slumbers."

Sintram fell into a deep sleep smiling, and breathing softly. Rolf and the castellan remained by his bed, whilst the two travellers pursued their way in the quiet starlight.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE dawn had almost appeared when Rolf, who had been asleep, was awakened by low singing, and as he looked around he perceived with surprise that the sounds came from the lips of the castellan, who said, as if in explanation: "So does Sir Weigand sing at the convent gates, and they are kindly opened to him." Upon which old Rolf fell asleep again, uncertain whether what had passed had been a dream or a reality. After a while the bright sunshine awoke him again, and when he rose up he saw the countenance of the castellan wonderfully illuminated by the red morning rays; and altogether those features, once so fearful, were shining with a soft, nay almost childlike mildness. The mysterious man seemed to be the while listening to the motionless air, as if he were hearing a most pleasant discourse or lofty music; and as Rolf was about to speak he made him a sign of entreaty to remain quiet, and continued in his eager, listening attitude.

At length he sank slowly and contentedly back in his seat, whispering: "God be praised! She has granted his last prayer; he will be laid in the burial ground of the convent, and now he has forgiven me in the depths of his heart. I can assure you that he finds a peaceful end."

Rolf did not dare ask a question, or awake his lord; he felt as if one already departed had spoken to him.

The castellan long remained still, always smiling brightly. At last he raised himself a little, again listened, and said: "It is over. The sound of the bells is very sweet. We have overcome. Oh, how soft and easy does the good God make it to us!" And so it came to pass. He stretched himself back as if weary, and his soul was freed from his care-worn body.

Rolf now gently awoke his young knight, and pointed to the smiling dead. And Sintram smiled too; he and his good esquire fell on their knees and prayed to God for the departed spirit. Then they rose up and bore the cold body to the vaulted hall, and watched by it with holy candles until the return of the chaplain. That the pilgrim would not come back again they very well knew.

Accordingly towards midday the chaplain returned alone. He could scarcely do more than confirm what was already known to them. He only added a comforting and hopeful greeting from Sintram's mother to her son, and told that the blissful Weigand had fallen asleep like a tired child, whilst Verena with calm tenderness held a crucifix before him.

"And in eternal peace our penance end!"

sang Sintram gently to himself; and they prepared a last resting place for the now so peaceful castellan, and laid him therein with all the due solemn rites.

The chaplain was obliged soon afterwards to depart, but bidding Sintram farewell, he again said kindly to him: "Thy dear mother assuredly knows how gentle and calm and good thou art now!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN the castle of Sir Biorn of the Fiery Eyes Christmas eve had not passed so brightly and happily; but yet there too all had gone visibly according to God's will.

Folko, at the entreaty of the lord of the castle, had allowed Gabrielle to support him into the hall; and the three now sat at the round stone table whereon a sumptuous meal was laid. On either side there were long tables, at which sat the retainers of both knights in full armor, according to the custom of the north. Torches and lamps lighted the lofty hall with an almost dazzling brightness.

Midnight had now begun its solemn reign, and Gabrielle softly reminded her wounded knight to withdraw. Biorn heard her and said: "You are right, fair lady, our knight needs rest. Only let us first keep up one more old honorable custom."

And at his sign four attendants brought in with pomp a great boar's head, which looked as if cut out of solid gold, and placed it in the middle of the stone table. Biorn's retainers rose with reverence and took off their helmets; Biorn himself did the same.

What means this?" asked Folko very gravely.

"What thy forefathers and mine have done on every Yule feast," answered Biorn. "We are going to make vows on the boar's head, and then pass the goblet round to their fulfillment."

"We no longer keep what our ancestors called the Yule feast," said Folko; "we are good Christians, and we keep holy Christmastide."

"To do the one and not to leave the other undone," answered Biorn. "I hold my ancestors too dear to forget their knightly customs. Those who think otherwise may act according to their wisdom, but that shall not hinder me. I swear by the golden boar's head ——." And he stretched out his hand, to lay it solemnly upon it.

But Folko called out: "In the name of our holy Saviour, forbear. Where I am, and still have breath and will, none shall celebrate undisturbed the rites of the wild heathens."

Biorn of the Fiery Eyes glared angrily at him. The men of the two barons separated from each other, with a hollow sound of rattling armor, and ranged themselves in two bodies on either side of the hall, each behind its leader. Already here and there helmets were fastened and visors closed.

"Bethink thee yet what thou art doing," said Biorn. "I was about to vow an eternal union with the house of Montfaucon, nay, even to bind myself to do it grateful homage; but if thou disturb me in the customs which have come to me from my forefathers, look to thy safety and the safety of all that is dear to thee. My wrath no longer knows any bounds."

Folko made a sign to the pale Gabrielle to retire behind his followers, saying to her: "Be of good cheer, my noble wife, weaker Christians have braved, for the sake of God and of His holy Church, greater dangers than now seem to threaten us. Believe me, the Lord of Montfaucon is not so easily ensnared."

Gabrielle obeyed, something comforted by Folko's fearless smile; but this smile inflamed yet more the fury of Biorn. He again stretched out his hand towards the boar's head, as if about to make some dreadful vow, when Folko snatched a gauntlet of Biorn's off the table, with which he, with his unwounded left arm, struck so powerful a blow on the gilt idol that it fell crashing to the ground, shivered to pieces. Biorn and his followers stood as if turned to stone. But soon swords were grasped by armed hands, shields were taken down from the walls, and an angry, threatening murmur sounded through the hall.

At a sign from Folko, a battle-axe was brought him by one of his faithful retainers; he swung it high in air with his powerful left hand, and stood looking like an avenging angel as he spoke these words through the tumult

with awful calmness: "What seek ye, O deluded Northmen? What wouldst thou, sinful lord? Ye are indeed become heathens; and I hope to show you, by my readiness for battle, that it is not in my right arm alone that God has put strength for victory. But if ye can yet hear, listen to my words. Biorn, on this same accursed, and now, by God's help, shivered boar's head, thou didst lay thy hand when thou didst swear to sacrifice any inhabitants of the German towns that should fall into thy power. And Gotthard Lentz came, and Rudlieb came, driven on these shores by the storm. What didst thou then do, O savage Biorn? What did ye do at his bidding, ye who were keeping the Yule feast with him? Try your fortune on me. The Lord will be with me, as He was with those holy men. To arms, and —"(he turned to his warriors) "let our battle cry be Gotthard and Rudlieb!"

Then Biorn let drop his drawn sword, then his followers paused, and none among the Norwegians dared lift his eyes from the ground. By degrees, they one by one began to disappear from the hall; and at last Biorn stood quite alone opposite to the baron and his followers. He seemed hardly aware that he had been deserted, but he fell on his knees, stretched out his shining sword, pointed to the broken boar's head, and said: "Do with me as you have done with that; I deserve no better. I ask but one favor, only one; do not disgrace me, noble baron, by seeking shelter in another castle of Norway."

"I fear you not," answered Folko, after some thought; "and, as far as may be, I freely forgive you." Then he drew the sign of the cross over the wild form of Biorn, and left the hall with Gabrielle. The retainers of the house of Montfaucon followed him proudly and silently.

The hard spirit of the fierce lord of the castle was now quite broken, and he watched with increased humility every look of Folko and Gabrielle. But they withdrew more and more into the happy solitude of their own apartments, where they enjoyed, in the midst of the sharp winter, a bright spring-tide of happiness. The wounded condition of Folko did not hinder the evening delights of songs and music and poetry, but rather a new charm was added to them when the tall, handsome knight leant on the arm of his delicate lady, and they thus, changing as it were their deportment and duties, walked slowly through the torch-lit halls, scattering their kindly greetings like flowers among the crowds of men and women.

All this time little or nothing was heard of poor Sintram. The last wild outbreak of his father had increased the terror with which Gabrielle remembered the self-accusations of the youth; and the more resolutely Folko kept silence the more did she bode some dreadful mystery. Indeed, a secret shudder came over the knight when he thought on the pale, dark-haired youth. Sintram's repentance had bordered on settled despair; no one knew ever what he was doing in the fortress of evil report on the Rocks of the Moon. Strange ru

mors were brought by the retainers who had fled from it that the evil spirit had obtained complete power over Sintram, that no man could stay with him, and that the fidelity of the dark mysterious castellan had cost him his life.

Folko could hardly drive away the fearful suspicion that the lonely young knight was become a wicked magician.

And perhaps, indeed, evil spirits did flit about the banished Sintram, but it was without his calling them up. In his dreams he often saw the wicked enchantress Venus, in her golden chariot drawn by winged cats, pass over the battlements of the stone fortress, and heard her say, mocking him: "Foolish Sintram, foolish Sintram! hadst thou but obeyed the little Master! thou wouldst now be in Helen's arms, and the Rocks of the Moon would be called the Rocks of Love, and the stone fortress would be the garden of roses. Thou wouldst have lost thy pale face and dark hair,— for thou art only enchanted, dear youth, — and thine eyes would have beamed more softly, and thy cheeks bloomed more freshly, and thy hair would have been more golden than was that of Prince Paris when men wondered at his beauty. Oh, how Helen would have loved thee!" Then she showed him in a mirror, how, as a marvellously beautiful knight, he knelt before Gabrielle, who sank into his arms blushing as the morning. When he awoke from such dreams, he would seize eagerly the sword and scarf given him by his lady,— as a

shipwrecked man seizes the plank which is to save him; and while the hot tears fell on them he would murmur to himself: "There was, indeed, one hour in my sad life when I was worthy and happy."

Once he sprang up at midnight after one of these dreams, but this time with more thrilling horror; for it had seemed to him that the features of the enchantress Venus had changed towards the end of her speech as she looked down upon him with marvellous scorn, and she appeared to him as the hideous little Master. The youth had no better means of calming his distracted mind than to throw the sword and scarf of Gabrielle over his shoulders, and to hasten forth under the solemn starry canopy of the wintry sky. He walked in deep thought backwards and forwards under the leafless oaks and the snow-laden firs which grew on the high ramparts.

Then he heard a sorrowful cry of distress sound from the moat. It was as if some one were attempting to sing, but was stopped by inward grief. Sintram exclaimed: "Who 's there?" and all was still. When he was silent, and again began his walk, the frightful groanings and moanings were heard afresh, as if they came from a dying person. Sintram overcame the horror which seemed to hold him back, and began in silence to climb down into the deep dry moat which was cut in the rock. He was soon so low down that he could no longer see the stars shining. Beneath him moved a shrouded form; and sliding with invol-

untary haste down the steep descent, he stood near the groaning figure. It ceased its lamentations, and began to laugh like a maniac from beneath its long, folded, female garments.

"Oh, ho, my comrade! oh, ho, my comrade! wert thou going a little too fast? Well, well, it is all right; and see now, thou standest no higher than I, my pious, valiant youth! Take it patiently,—take it patiently!"

"What dost thou want with me? Why dost thou laugh? why dost thou weep?" asked Sintram impatiently.

"I might ask thee the same questions," answered the dark figure, "and thou wouldst be less able to answer me than I to answer thee. Why dost thou laugh? why dost thou weep?—Poor creature! But I will show thee a remarkable thing in thy fortress, of which thou knowest nothing. Give heed!"

And the shrouded figure began to scratch and scrape at the stones till a little iron door opened, and showed a long passage which led into the deep darkness.

"Wilt thou come with me?" whispered the strange being: "it is the shortest way to thy father's castle. In half an hour we shall come out of this passage, and we shall be in thy beauteous lady's apartment. Duke Menelaus shall lie in a magic sleep,—leave that to me,—and then thou wilt take the slight, delicate form in thine arms, and bring her to the Rocks of the Moon; so thou wilt win back all that seemed lost by thy former wavering."

Sintram trembled visibly, fearfully shaken

to and fro by the fever of passion and the stings of conscience. But at last, pressing the sword and scarf to his heart, he cried out: "Oh, that fairest, most glorious hour of my life! If I lose all other joys, I will hold fast that brightest hour!"

"A bright, glorious hour!" said the figure from under its veil, like an evil echo. "Dost thou know whom thou then conquerédst? A good old friend, who only showed himself so sturdy to give thee the glory of overcoming him. Wilt thou convince thyself? Wilt thou look?"

The dark garments of the little figure flew open, and the dwarf warrior in strange armor, the gold horns on his helmet, and the curved spear in his hand, the very same whom Sintram thought he had slain on Niflung's Heath, now stood before him and laughed: "Thou seest, my youth, everything in the wide world is but dreams and froth; wherefore hold fast the dream which delights thee, and sip up the froth which refreshes thee! Hasten to that underground passage, it leads up to thy angel Helen. Or wouldst thou first know thy friend yet better?"

His visor opened, and the hateful face of the little Master glared upon the knight. Sintram asked, as if in a dream: "Art thou also that wicked enchantress Venus?"

"Something like her," answered the little Master laughing, "or rather she is something like me; and if thou wilt only get disenchanted, and recover the beauty of Prince Paris, then,

O Prince Paris," and his voice changed to an alluring song, "then, O Prince Paris, I shall be fair like thee."

At this moment the good Rolf appeared above on the rampart; a consecrated taper in his lantern shone down into the moat as he sought for the missing young knight. "In God's name, Sir Sintram," he called out, "what has the spectre of him whom you slew on Niflung's Heath, and whom I never could bury, to do with you?"

"Seest thou well? hearest thou well?" whispered the little Master, and drew back into the darkness of the underground passage. "The wise man up there knows me well. There was nothing in thy heroic feat. Come, take the joys of life while thou mayest."

But Sintram sprang back with a strong effort into the circle of light made by the shining of the taper from above, and cried out: "Depart from me, unquiet spirit! I know well that I bear a name on me in which thou canst have no part."

Little Master rushed in fear and rage into the passage, and, yelling, shut the iron door behind him. It seemed as if he could still be heard groaning and roaring.

Sintram climbed up the wall of the moat, and made a sign to his foster father not to speak to him: he only said: "One of my best joys, yes the very best, has been taken from me; but, by God's help, I am not yet lost."

In the earliest light of the following morning, he and Rolf stopped up the entrance to the perilous passage with huge blocks of stone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE long northern winter was at last ended, the fresh green leaves rustled merrily in the woods, patches of soft moss twinkled amongst the rocks, the valleys grew green, the brooks sparkled, the snow melted from all but the highest mountain tops, and the bark which was ready to carry away Folko and Gabrielle, danced on the sunny waves of the sea. The baron, now quite recovered, and strong and fresh as though his health had sustained no injury, stood one morning on the shore with his fair lady; and, full of glee at the prospect of returning to their home, the noble pair looked on well pleased at their attendants who were busied in lading the ship.

Then said one of them in the midst of a confused sound of talking: "But what has appeared to me the most fearful and the most strange thing in this northern land is the stone fortress on the Rocks of the Moon. I have never, indeed, been inside it, but when I used to see it in our huntings, towering above the tall fir trees, there came a tightness over my breast, as if something unearthly were dwelling in it. And a few weeks ago, when the snow was yet lying hard in the valleys, I came unawares quite close upon the strange building. The

young knight Sintram was walking alone on the ramparts as twilight came on, like the spirit of a departed knight, and he drew from the lute which he carried such soft, melancholy tones, and he sighed so deeply and sorrowfully——"

The voice of the speaker was drowned in the noise of the crowd, and as he also just then reached the ship with his package hastily fastened up, Folko and Gabrielle could not hear the rest of his speech. But the fair lady looked on her knight with eyes dim with tears, and sighed: "Is it not behind those mountains that the Rocks of the Moon lie? The unhappy Sintram makes me sad at heart."

"I understand thee, sweet gracious lady, and the pure compassion of thy heart," replied Folko, instantly ordering his swift-footed steed to be brought. He placed his noble lady under the charge of his retainers, and leaping into the saddle, he hastened, followed by the grateful smiles of Gabrielle, along the valley towards the stone fortress.

Sintram was seated near the drawbridge, touching the strings of the lute, and shedding some tears on the golden chords almost as Montfaucon's esquire had described him. Suddenly a cloudy shadow passed over him and he looked up, expecting to see a flight of cranes in the air; but the sky was clear and blue. While the young knight was still wondering, a long bright spear fell at his feet from a battlement of the armory turret

"Take it up,—make good use of it! thy foe is near at hand! Near also is the downfall of

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thy dearest happiness." Thus he heard it distinctly whispered in his ear; and it seemed to him that he saw the shadow of the little Master glide close by him to a neighboring cleft in the rock. But at the same time also, a tall, gigantic, haggard figure passed along the valley, in some measure like the departed pilgrim, only much, very much larger, and he raised his long bony arm fearfully threatening, then disappeared in an ancient tomb.

At the very same instant Sir Folko of Montfaucon came swiftly as the wind up the Rocks of the Moon, and he must have seen something of those strange apparitions, for as he stopped close behind Sintram, he looked rather pale, and asked low and earnestly: "Sir knight, who are those two with whom you were just now holding converse here?"

"The good God knows," answered Sintram; "I know them not." "If the good God does but know!" cried Montfaucon; "but I fear me that He knows very little more of you or your deeds."

"You speak strangely hard words," said Sintram. "Yet ever since that evening of misery,—alas! and even long before,—I must bear with all that comes from you. Dear sir, you may believe me, I know not those fearful companions; I call them not; and I know not what terrible curse binds them to my footsteps. The merciful God, as I would hope, is mindful of me the while,—as a faithful shepherd does not forget even the worst and most widely-straying of his flock, but calls after it

with an anxious voice in the gloomy wilderness."

Then the anger of the baron was quite melted. Two bright tears stood in his eyes, and he said: "No, assuredly, God has not forgotten thee; only do thou not forget thy gracious God. I did not come to rebuke thee, I came to bless thee in Gabrielle's name and in my own. The Lord preserve thee, the Lord guide thee, the Lord lift thee up! And, Sintram, on the far-off shores of Normandy I shall bear thee in mind; and I shall hear how thou strugglest against the curse which weighs down thy unhappy life; and if thou ever shake it off, and stand as a noble conqueror over Sin and Death, then thou shalt receive from me a token of love and reward more precious than either thou or I can understand at this moment."

The words flowed prophetically from the baron's lips: he himself was only half conscious of what he said. With a kind salutation, he turned his noble steed, and again flew down the valley towards the sea shore.

"Fool, fool! thrice a fool!" whispered the angry voice of the little Master in Sintram's ear. But old Rolf was singing his morning hymn in clear tones within the castle, and the last lines were these:—

"Whom worldlings scorn,
Who lives forlorn,
On God's own word doth rest;
With heavenly light
His path is bright,
His lot among the blest."

Then a holy joy took possession of Sintram's heart, and he looked around him yet more gladly than in the hour when Gabrielle gave him the scarf and sword, and Falko dubbed him knight.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE baron and his lovely lady were sailing across the broad sea with favoring gales of spring,—nay the coast of Normandy had already appeared above the waves; but still was Biorn of the Fiery Eyes sitting gloomy and speechless in his castle. He had taken no leave of his guests. There was more of proud fear of Montfaucon than of reverential love for him in his soul, especially since the adventure with the boar's head; and the thought was bitter to his haughty spirit, that the great baron, the flower and glory of their whole race, should have come in peace to visit him, and should now be departing in displeasure, in stern reproachful displeasure. He had constantly before his mind, and it never failed to bring fresh pangs, the remembrance of how all had come to pass, and how all might have gone otherwise; and he was always fancying he could hear the songs in which after generations would recount this voyage of the great Folko, and the worthlessness of the savage Biorn. At length, full of fierce anger, he cast away the fetters of his troubled spirit, he burst out

of the castle with all his horsemen, and began to carry on a warfare more fearful and more lawless than any in which he had yet been engaged.

Sintram heard the sound of his father's war horn; and committing the stone fortress to old Rolf, he sprang forth ready armed for the combat. But the flames of the cottages and farms on the mountains rose up before him, and showed him, written as if in characters of fire, what kind of war his father was waging. Yet he went on towards the spot where the army was mustered, but only to offer his mediation, affirming that he would not lay his hand on his good sword in so abhorred a service, even though the stone fortress, and his father's castle besides, should fall before the vengeance of their enemies. Biorn hurled the spear which he held in his hand against his son with mad fury. The deadly weapon whizzed past him. Sintram remained standing with his visor raised, —he did not move one limb in his defense,— when he said: "Father, do what you will; but I join not in your godless warfare."

Biorn of the Fiery Eyes laughed scornfully: "It seems I am always to have a spy over me here; my son succeeds to the dainty French knight!" But nevertheless he came to himself, accepted Sintram's mediation, made amends for the injuries he had done, and returned gloomily to his castle. Sintram went back to the Rocks of the Moon.

Such occurrences were frequent after that time. It went so far that Sintram came to be

looked upon as the protector of all those whom his father pursued with relentless fury: but, nevertheless, sometimes his own wildness would carry the young knight away to accompany his fierce father in his fearful deeds. Then Biorn used to laugh with horrible pleasure, and to say: "See there, my son, how the flames we have lighted blaze up from the villages, as the blood spouts up from the wounds our swords have made! It is plain to me, however much thou mayest pretend to the contrary, that thou art, and wilt ever remain, my true and beloved heir!"

After thus fearfully erring, Sintram could find no comfort but in hastening to the chaplain of Drontheim, and confessing to him his misery and his sins. The chaplain would freely absolve him, after due penance and repentance, and again raise up the broken-hearted youth; but would often say: "Oh, how nearly hadst thou reached thy last trial, and gained the victory, and looked on Verena's countenance, and atoned for all! Now thou hast thrown thyself back for years. Think, my son, on the shortness of man's life; if thou art always falling back anew, how wilt thou ever gain the summit on this side the grave?"

Years came and went, and Biorn's hair was white as snow, and the youth Sintram had reached the middle age. Old Rolf was now scarcely able to leave the stone fortress; and sometimes he said: "I feel it a burden that my life should yet be prolonged; but also there is much comfort in it, for I still think the good

God has in store for me here below some great happiness; and it must be something in which you are concerned, my beloved Sir Sintram, for what else in the whole world could rejoice me?"

But all remained as it was, and Sintram's fearful dreams at Christmas time each year rather increased than diminished in horror. Again the holy season was drawing near, and the mind of the sorely afflicted knight was more troubled than ever before. Sometimes, if he had been reckoning up the nights till it should come, a cold sweat would stand on his forehead, while he said: "Mark my words, dear old foster father, this time something most awfully decisive lies before you."

One evening he felt an overwhelming anxiety about his father. It seemed to him that the prince of darkness was going up to Biorn's castle; and in vain did Rolf remind him that the snow was lying deep in the valleys, in vain did he suggest that the knight might be overtaken by his frightful dreams in the lonely mountains during the night time. "Nothing can be worse to me than remaining here would be," replied Sintram.

He took his horse from the stable and rode forth in the gathering darkness. The noble steed slipped and stumbled and fell in the trackless ways, but his rider always raised him up, and urged him only more swiftly and eagerly towards the object which he longed and yet dreaded to reach. Nevertheless he might never have arrived at it had not his faithful hound Skovmark kept with him.

The dog sought out the lost track for his beloved master and invited him into it with joyous barkings, and warned him by his howls against precipices and treacherous ice under the snow. Thus they arrived about midnight at Biorn's castle. The windows of the hall shone opposite to them with a brilliant light, as though some great feast were kept there, and confused sounds as of singing, met their ears. Sintram gave his horse hastily to some retainers in the court yard and ran up the steps, whilst Skovmark stayed by the well-known horse.

A good esquire came towards Sintram within the castle, and said: "God be praised, my dear master, that you are come, for surely nothing good is going on above. But take heed to yourself, also, and be not deluded. Your father has a guest with him,—and, as I think, a hateful one."

Sintram shuddered as he threw open the doors. A little man in the dress of a miner was sitting with his back towards him. The armor had been for some time past again ranged round the stone table, so that only two places were left empty. The seat opposite the door had been taken by Biorn of the Fiery Eyes, and the dazzling light of the torches fell upon his features with so red a flare that he perfectly enacted that fearful sirname.

"Father, whom have you here with you?' cried Sintram; and his suspicions rose to certainty as the miner turned around and the de-

testable face of the little Master grinned from under his dark hood.

"Yes, just see, my fair son," said the wild Biorn; "thou hast not been here for a long while,—and so tonight this jolly comrade has paid me a visit, and thy place has been taken. But throw one of the suits of armor out of the way, and put a seat for thyself instead of it,—and come and drink with us and be merry."

"Yes, do so, Sir Sintram," said the little Master, with a laugh. "Nothing worse could come of it than that the broken pieces of armor might clatter somewhat strangely together, or at most that the disturbed spirit of him to whom the suit belonged might look over your shoulder; but he would not drink up any of our wine,—ghosts have nothing to do with that. So now fall to!"

Biorn joined in the laughter of the hideous stranger with wild mirth, and while Sintram was mustering up his whole strength not to lose his senses at so terrible words, and was fixing a calm steady look on the little Master's face, the old man cried out: "Why dost thou look at him so? Does it seem to thee as though thou sawest thyself in a mirror? Now that you are together I no not see it so much; but a while ago I thought that you were like enough to each other to be mistaken."

"God forbid!" said Sintram, walking up close to the fearful apparition: "I command thee, detestable stranger, to depart from this castle, in right of my authority, as my father's heir,—as a consecrated knight and as a spirit!"

Biorn seemed as if he wished to oppose himself to this command with all his savage might. The little Master muttered to himself: "Thou art not by any means the master in this house, pious knight; thou hast never lighted a fire on this hearth." Then Sintram drew the sword which Gabrielle had given him, held the cross of the hilt before the eyes of his evil guest, and said, calmly, but with a powerful voice: "Worship, or fly!" And he fled, the frightful stranger,— he fled with such lightning speed, that it could scarcely be seen whether he had sprung through the window or door. But in going he overthrew some of the armor, the tapers went out, and it seemed that the pale blue flame which lighted up the hall in a marvellous manner gave a fulfillment to the little Master's former words; and that the spirits of those to whom the armor had belonged were leaning over the table, grinning fearfully.

Both the father and the son were filled with horror; but each chose an opposite way to save himself. Biorn wished to have his hateful guest back again; and the power of his will was seen when the little Master's step resounded anew on the stairs, and his brown shrivelled hand shook the lock of the door. On the other hand, Sintram ceased not to say within himself: "We are lost, if he come back! We are lost to all eternity, if he come back?" And he fell on his knees, and prayed fervently from his troubled heart to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then the little Master left the door, and again Biorn willed him to return,

and again Sintram's prayers drove him away. So went on this strife of wills throughout the long night; and howling whirlwinds raged the while around the castle, till all the household thought the end of the world was come. At length the dawn of morning appeared through the windows of the hall,—the fury of the storm was lulled,—Biorn sank back powerless in slumber on his seat,—peace and hope came to the inmates of the castle,—and Sintram, pale and exhausted, went out to breathe the dewy air of the mild winter's morning before the castle gates.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE faithful Skovmark followed his master, caressing him; and when Sintram fell asleep on a stone seat in the wall, he lay at his feet, keeping watchful guard. Suddenly he pricked up his ears, looked around with delight, and bounded joyfully down the mountain. Just afterwards the chaplain of Drontheim appeared amongst the rocks, and the good beast went up to him as if to greet him, and then again ran back to the knight to announce the welcome visitor.

Sintram opened his eyes, as a child whose Christmas-gifts have been placed at his bedside. For the chaplain smiled at him as he had never yet seen him smile. There was in it a token of victory and blessing, or at least of the

near approach of both. "Thou hast done much yesterday, very much," said the holy priest; and his hands were joined, and his eyes full of bright tears. "I praise God for thee, my noble knight. Verena knows all, and she too praises God for thee. I do indeed now dare hope that the time will soon come when thou mayest appear before her. But Sintram, Sir Sintram, there is need of haste: for the old man above requires speedy aid, and thou hast still a heavy—as I hope the last—yet a most heavy trial to undergo for his sake. Arm thyself, my knight, arm thyself even with bodily weapons. In truth, this time only spiritual armor is needed, but it always befits a knight, as well as a monk, to wear in decisive moments the entire solemn garb of his station. If it so please thee, we will go directly to Drontheim together. Thou must return thence tonight. Such is a part of the hidden decree, which has been dimly unfolded to Verena's foresight. Here there is yet much that is wild and distracting, and thou hast great need today of calm preparation."

With humble joy Sintram bowed his assent, and called for his horse and for a suit of armor. "Only," added he, "let not any of that armor be brought which was last night overthrown in the hall!"

His orders were quickly obeyed. The arms which were fetched, adorned with fine engraved work, the simple helmet, formed rather like that of an esquire than a knight, the lance of almost gigantic size, which belonged to the

suit, — on all these the chaplain gazed in deep thought and with melancholy emotion. At last, when Sintram, with the help of his esquires, was well nigh equipped, the holy priest spoke: "Wonderful providence of God! See, dear Sintram, this armor and this spear were formerly those of Sir Weigand the Slender, and with them he did many mighty deeds. When he was tended by your mother in the castle, and when even your father still showed himself kind towards him, he asked, as a favor, that his armor and his lance should be allowed to hang in Biorn's armory;—Weigand himself, as you well know, intended to build a cloister and to live there as a monk;—and he put his old esquire's helmet with it, instead of another, because he was yet wearing that one when he first saw the fair Verena's angelic face. How wondrously does it now come to pass, that these very arms, which have so long been laid aside, should be brought to you for the decisive hour of your life! To me, as far as my short-sighted human wisdom can tell,—to me it seems truly a very solemn token, but one full of high and glorious promise."

Sintram stood now in complete array, composed and stately, and, from his tall slender figure, might have been taken for a youth, had not the deep lines of care which furrowed his countenance shown him to be advanced in years.

"Who has placed boughs on the head of my war horse?" asked Sintram of the esquires, with displeasure. "I am not a conqueror, nor

a wedding guest. And besides, there are no boughs now but those red and yellow crackling oak-leaves, dull and dead like the season itself."

"Sir Knight, I know not myself," answered an esquire; "but it seemed to me that it must be so."

"Let it be," said the chaplain. "I feel that this also comes as a token full of meaning from the right source.

Then the knight threw himself into his saddle, the priest went beside him, and they both rode slowly and silently towards Drontheim. The faithful dog followed his master. When the lofty castle of Drontheim appeared in sight, a gentle smile spread itself over Sintram's countenance, like sunshine over a wintry valley.

"God has done great things for me," said he. "I once rushed from here, a fearfully wild boy; I now come back a penitent man. I trust that it will yet go well with my poor troubled life."

The chaplain assented kindly, and soon afterwards the travellers passed under the echoing vaulted gateway into the castle yard. At a sign from the priest, the retainers approached with respectful haste and took charge of the horse; then he and Sintram went through long winding passages and up many steps to the remote chamber which the chaplain had chosen for himself, far away from the noise of men and near to the clouds and the stars. There the two passed a quiet day in devout prayer and earnest reading of Holy Scripture.

When the evening began to close in, the chaplain arose and said: "And now, my knight, get ready thy horse and mount and ride back again to thy father's castle. A toilsome way lies before thee, and I dare not go with you. But I can and will call upon the Lord for you all through the long fearful night. O beloved instrument of the Most High, thou wilt yet not be lost!"

Thrilling with strange forebodings, but nevertheless strong and vigorous in spirit, Sintram did according to the holy man's desire. The sun set as the knight approached a long valley, strangely shut in by rocks, through which lay the road to his father's castle.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BEFORE entering the rocky pass, the knight, with a prayer and thanksgiving, looked back once more at the castle of Drontheim. There it was, so vast and quiet and peaceful; the bright windows of the chaplain's high chamber yet lighted up by the last gleam of the sun, which had already disappeared. In front of Sintram was the gloomy valley, as if his grave. Then there came towards him some one riding on a small horse; and Skovmark, who had gone up to the stranger as if to find out who he was, now ran back with his tail between his legs and his ears put back, howling and whining, and crept terrified under his

master's war horse. But even the noble steed appeared to have forgotten his once so fearless and warlike ardor. He trembled violently, and when the knight would have turned him towards the stranger, he reared and snorted and plunged, and began to throw himself backwards. It was only with difficulty that Sintram's strength and horsemanship got the better of him; and he was all white with foam when Sintram came up to the unknown traveller.

"You have cowardly beasts with you," said the latter in a low, smothered voice.

Sintram was unable, in the ever-increasing darkness, rightly to distinguish what kind of being he saw before him; only a very pallid face, which at first he had thought was covered with freshly fallen snow, met his eyes from amidst the long, hanging garments. It seemed that the stranger carried a small box wrapped up. His little horse, as if wearied out, bent his head down towards the ground, whereby a bell, which hung from the wretched torn bridle under his neck, was made to give a strange sound. After a short silence, Sintram replied: "Noble steeds avoid those of a worse race because they are ashamed of them; and the boldest dogs are attacked by a secret terror at the sight of forms to which they are not accustomed. I have no cowardly beasts with me."

"Good, sir knight; then ride with me through the valley."

"I am going through the valley, but I want no companions."

"But perhaps I want one. Do you not see that I am unarmed? And at this season, at this hour, there are frightful, unearthly beasts about."

Just then, as though to confirm the awful words of the stranger, a thing swung itself down from one of the nearest trees, covered with hoar frost; no one could say if it were a snake or a lizard; it curled and twisted itself, and appeared about to slide down upon the knight or his companion. Sintram levelled his spear and pierced the creature through; but, with the most hideous contortions, it fixed itself firmly on the spear head; and in vain did the knight endeavor to rub it off against the rocks or the trees. Then he let his spear rest upon his right shoulder, with the point behind him, so that the horrible beast no longer met his sight; and he said with good courage to the stranger: "It does seem, indeed, that I could help you, and I am not forbidden to have an unknown stranger in my company; so let us push on bravely into the valley."

"Help!" so resounded the solemn answer; "not help. I perhaps may help thee. But God have mercy upon thee if the time should ever come when I could no longer help thee. Then thou wouldst be lost, and I should become very frightful to thee. But we will go through the valley,—I have thy knightly word for it. Come!"

They rode forward, Sintram's horse still showing signs of fear, the faithful dog still whining, but both obedient to their master's

will. The knight was calm and steadfast. The snow had slipped down from the smooth rocks, and by the light of the rising moon could be seen various strange twisted shapes on their sides, some looking like snakes, and some like human faces, but they were only formed by the veins in the rock and the half-bare roots of trees, which had planted themselves in that desert place with capricious firmness. High above and at a great distance the castle of Drontheim, as if to take leave, appeared again through an opening in the rocks. The knight then looked keenly at his companion, and he almost felt as if Weigand the Slender were riding beside him.

"In God's name," cried he, "art thou not the shade of that departed knight who suffered and died for Verena!"

"I have not suffered, I have not died; but ye suffer, and ye die, poor mortals!" murmured the stranger. "I am not Weigand. I am that other, who was so like him, and whom thou hast also met before now in the wood."

Sintram strove to free himself from the terror which came over him at these words. He looked at his horse; it appeared to him entirely altered. The dry, many-colored oak leaves on its head were waving like the flames around a sacrifice in the uncertain moonlight. He looked down again, to see after his faithful Skovmark. Fear had likewise most wondrously changed him. On the ground in the middle of the road were lying dead men's bones, and hideous lizards were crawling about; and, in defiance of

the wintry season, poisonous mushrooms were growing up all around.

"Can this be still my horse on which I am riding?" said the knight to himself in a low voice; "and can that trembling beast which runs at my side be my dog?"

Then some one called after him in a yelling voice: "Stop! stop! Take me also with you."

Looking around, Sintram perceived a small, frightful figure with horns, and a face partly like a wild boar and partly like a bear, walking along on its hind legs, which were those of a horse; and in its hand was a strange, hideous weapon, shaped like a hook or a sickle. It was the being who had been wont to trouble him in his dreams; and, alas! it was also the wretched little Master himself, who, laughing wildly, stretched out a long claw towards the knight.

The bewildered Sintram murmured: "I must have fallen asleep; and now my dreams are coming over me!"

"Thou art awake," replied the rider of the little horse: "but thou knowest me also in thy dreams. For, behold! I am Death." And his garments fell from him, and there appeared a mouldering skeleton, its ghastly head crowned with serpents; that which he had kept hidden under his mantle was an hour-glass with the sand almost run out. Death held it towards the knight in his fleshless hand. The bell at the neck of the little horse gave forth a solemn sound. It was a passing bell.

"Lord, into Thy hands I commend my

spirit!" prayed Sintram; and full of earnest devotion he rode after Death, who beckoned him on.

"He has thee not yet! He has thee not yet!" screamed the fearful fiend. "Give thyself up to me rather. In one instant,—for swift are thy thoughts, swift is my might,—in one instant thou shalt be in Normandy. Helen yet blooms in beauty as when she departed hence, and this very night she would be thine." And once again he began his unholy praises of Gabrielle's loveliness, and Sintram's heart glowed like wild-fire in his weak breast.

Death said nothing more, but raised the hourglass in his right hand yet higher and higher; and as the sand now ran out more quickly, a soft light streamed from the glass over Sintram's countenance, and then it seemed to him as if eternity in all its calm majesty were rising before him, and a world of confusion dragging him back with a deadly grasp.

"I command thee, wild form that followest me," cried he: "I command thee, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to cease from thy seducing words, and to call thyself by that name by which thou art recorded in Holy Writ!"

A name, more fearful than a thunderclap, burst despairingly from the lips of the Tempter, and he disappeared.

"He will return no more," said Death in a kindly tone.

"And now I am become wholly thine, my stern companion?"

"Not yet, my Sintram. I shall not come to thee till many, many years are past. But thou must not forget me the while."

"I will keep the thought of thee steadily before my soul, thou fearful yet wholesome monitor, thou awful yet loving guide!"

"Oh! I can truly appear very gentle."

And so it proved indeed. His form became more softly defined in the increasing gleam of light which shone from the hour-glass; the features, which had been awful in their sternness, wore a gentle smile; the crown of serpents became a bright palm-wreath; instead of the horse appeared a white misty cloud in the moonlight; and the bell gave forth sounds as of sweet lullabies. Sintram thought he could hear these words amidst them:—

"The world and Satan are o'ercome,
Before thee gleams eternal light,
Warrior, who has won the strife:
Save from darkest shades of night
Him before whose aged eyes
All my terrors soon shall rise."

The knight well knew that his father was meant; and he urged on his noble steed, which now obeyed his master willingly and gladly, and the faithful dog also again ran beside him fearlessly. Death had disappeared; but in front of Sintram there floated a bright morning cloud, which continued visible after the sun had risen clear and warm in the bright winter sky.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"HE is dead! the horrors of that fearful stormy night have killed him!" Thus said, about this time, some of Biorn's retainers, who had not been able to bring him back to his senses since the morning of the day before. They had made a couch of wolf and bear skins for him in the great hall, in the midst of the armor which still lay scattered around. One of the esquires said with a low sigh: "The Lord have mercy on his poor wild soul!"

Just then the warder blew his horn from his tower, and a trooper came into the room with a look of surprise. "A knight is coming hither," said he; "a wonderful knight. I could have taken him for our Lord Sintram: but a bright, bright morning cloud floats so close before him, and throws over him such clear light, that one could fancy red flowers were showered down upon him. Besides, his horse has a wreath of red leaves on his head, which was never a custom of the son of our dead lord."

"Just such a one," replied another, "I wove for him yesterday. He was not pleased with it at first, but afterwards he let it remain."

"But why didst thou that?"

"It seemed to me as if I heard a voice sing-

ing again and again in my ear: 'Victory! victory! the noblest victory! The knight rides forth to victory!' And then I saw a branch of our oldest oak tree stretched towards me, which had kept on almost all its red and yellow leaves in spite of the snow. So I did according to what I had heard sung; and I plucked some of the leaves, and wove a triumphal wreath for the noble war horse. At the same time Skovmark,—you know that the faithful beast had always a great dislike to Biorn, and therefore had gone to the stable with the horse,—Skovmark jumped upon me, fawning, and seemed pleased, as if he wanted to thank me for my work; and such noble animals understand well about good prognostics."

They heard the sound of Sintram's spurs on the stone steps, and Skovmark's joyous bark. At that instant the supposed corpse of old Biorn sat up, looked around with rolling, staring eyes, and asked of the terrified retainers in a hollow voice: "Who comes there, ye people? who comes there? I know it is my son But who comes with him? The answer to that bears the sword of decision in its mouth. For see, good people, Gotthard and Rudlieb have prayed much for me; yet if the little Master come with him, I am lost in spite of them."

"Thou art not lost, my beloved father!" Sintram's kind voice was heard to say, as he softly opened the door, and the bright red morning cloud floated in with him.

Biorn joined his hands, cast a look of thankfulness up to Heaven and said, smiling: "Yes,

praised be God! it is the right companion! It is sweet gentle death!" And then he made a sign to his son to approach, saying: "Come here my deliverer; come, blessed of the Lord, that I may relate to thee all that has passed within me."

As Sintram now sat close by his father's couch, all who were in the room perceived a remarkable and striking change. For old Biorn, whose whole countenance, and not his eyes alone, had been wont to have a fiery aspect, was now quite pale, almost like white marble; while on the other hand, the cheeks of the once deadly pale Sintram glowed with a bright bloom like that of early youth. It was caused by the morning cloud which still shone upon him, whose presence in the room was rather felt than seen; but it produced a gentle thrill in every heart.

"See, my son," began the old man, softly and mildly, "I have lain for a long time in a death-like sleep, and have known nothing of what was going on around me; but within,—ah, within, I have known but too much! I thought that my soul would be destroyed by the eternal anguish; and yet again I felt, with much greater horror, that my soul was eternal like that anguish. Beloved son, thy cheeks that glowed so brightly are beginning to grow pale at my words. I refrain from more. But let me relate to you something more cheering. Far, far away, I could see a bright lofty church, where Gotthard and Rudlieb Lentz were kneeling and praying for me. Gotthard had grown very old,

and looked almost like one of our mountains covered with snow, on which the sun in the lovely evening hours is shining; and Rudlieb was also an elderly man, but very vigorous and very strong; and they both, with all their strength and vigor were calling upon God to aid me, their enemy. Then I heard a voice like that of an angel, saying: 'His son does the most for him! He must this night wrestle with death and with the fallen one! His victory will be victory, and his defeat will be defeat, for the old man and himself.' Thereupon I awoke; and I knew that all depended upon whom thou wouldst bring with thee. Thou hast conquered. Next to God, the praise be to thee!"

"Gotthard and Rudleib have helped much," replied Sintram; "and, beloved father, so have the fervent prayers of the chaplain of Drontheim. I felt, when struggling with temptation and deadly fear, how the heavenly breath of holy men floated around me and aided me."

"I am most willing to believe that, my noble son, and every thing thou sayest to me," answered the old man; and at the same moment the chaplain also coming in, Biorn stretched out his hand towards him with a smile of peace and joy. And now all seemed to be surrounded with a bright circle of unity and blessedness. "But see," said old Biorn, "how the faithful Skovmark jumps upon me now, and tries to caress me. It is not long since he used always to howl with terror when he saw me."

"My dear lord," said the chaplain, "there is

a spirit dwelling in good beasts, though dreamy and unconscious."

As the day wore on, the stillness in the hall increased. The last hour of the aged knight was drawing near, but he met it calmly and fearlessly. The chaplain and Sintram prayed beside his couch. The retainers knelt devoutly around. At length the dying man said: "Is that the prayer bell in Verena's cloister?" Sintram's looks said yea, while warm tears fell on the colorless cheeks of his father. A gleam shone in the old man's eyes, the morning cloud stood close over him, and then the gleam, the morning cloud, and life with them, departed from him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A FEW days afterwards Sintram stood in the parlor of the convent, and waited with a beating heart for his mother to appear. He had seen her for the last time when, a slumbering child, he had been awakened by her warm farewell kisses, and then had fallen asleep again, to wonder in his dreams what his mother had wanted with him, and to seek her in vain the next morning in the castle and in the garden. The chaplain was now at his side, rejoicing in the chastened rapture of the knight, whose fierce spirit had been softened, on whose cheeks a light reflection of that solemn morning cloud yet lingered.

The inner doors opened. In her white veil, stately and noble, the lady Verena came forward and with a heavenly smile she beckoned her son to approach the grating. There could be no thought here of any passionate outbreak, whether of sorrow or of joy. The holy peace which had its abode within these walls would have found its way to a heart less tried and less purified than that which beat in Sintram's bosom. Shedding some placid tears, the son knelt before his mother, kissed her flowing garments through the grating, and felt as if in paradise, where every wish and every care is hushed. "Beloved mother," said he, "let me become a holy man, as thou art a holy woman. Then I will betake myself to the cloister yonder; and perhaps I might one day be deemed worthy to be thy confessor, if illness or the weakness of old age should keep the good chaplain within the castle of Drontheim."

"That would be a sweet, quietly happy life, my good child," replied the Lady Verena; "but such is not thy vocation. Thou must remain a bold, powerful knight, and thou must spend the long life, which is almost always granted to us children of the north, in succoring the weak, in keeping down the lawless, and in yet another more bright and honorable employment which I hitherto rather honor than know."

"God's will be done!" said the knight, and he rose up full of self-devotion and firmness.

"That is my good son," said the Lady Verena. "Ah! how many sweet calm joys spring

up for us! See already is our longing desire of meeting again satisfied, and thou wilt never more be so entirely estranged from me. Every week on this day thou wilt come back to me, and thou wilt relate what glorious deeds thou hast done, and take back with thee my advice and my blessing."

"Am I not once more a good and happy child!" cried Sintram joyously; "only that the merciful God has given me in addition the strength of a man in body and spirit. Oh, how blessed is that son to whom it is allowed to gladden his mother's heart with the blossoms and the fruit of his life!"

Thus he left the quiet cloister's shade, joyful in spirit and richly laden with blessings, to enter on his noble career. He was not content with going about wherever there might be a rightful cause to defend or evil to avert: the gates of the now hospitable castle stood always open also to receive and shelter every stranger; and old Rolf, who was almost grown young again at the sight of his lord's excellence, was established as seneschal. The winter of Sintram's life set in bright and glorious, and it was only at times that he would sigh within himself and say: "Ah, Montfaucon! ah, Gabrielle! if I could dare to hope that you have quite forgiven me!"

CHAPTER XXX.

THE spring had come in its brightness to the northern lands, when one morning Sin-

tram turned his horse homewards, after a successful encounter with one of the most formidable disturbers of the peace of his neighborhood. His horsemen rode after him, singing as they went. As they drew near the castle, they heard the sound of joyous notes wound on the horn. "Some welcome visitor must have arrived," said the knight; and he spurred his horse to a quicker pace over the dewy meadow. While still at some distance, they descried old Rolf, busily engaged in preparing a table for the morning meal, under the trees in front of the castle gates. From all the turrets and battlements floated banners and flags in the fresh morning breeze, esquires were running to and fro in their gayest apparel. As soon as the good Rolf saw his master, he clapped his hands joyfully over his grey head, and hastened into the castle. Immediately the wide gates were thrown open; and Sintram, as he entered, was met by Rolf, whose eyes were filled with tears of joy while he pointed towards three noble forms that were following him.

Two men of high stature — one in extreme old age, the other grey headed, and both remarkably alike — were leading between them a fair young boy, in a page's dress of blue velvet, richly embroidered with gold. The two old men wore the dark velvet dress of German burghers, and had massive gold chains and large shining medals hanging around their necks.

Sintram had never before seen his honored guests, and yet he felt as if they were well

known and valued friends. The very aged man reminded him of his dying father's words about the snow-covered mountains lighted up by the evening sun; and then he remembered, he could scarcely tell how, that he had heard Folko say that one of the highest mountains of that sort in his southern land was called the St. Gotthard. And at the same time he knew that the old but yet vigorous man on the other side was named Rudlieb. But the boy who stood between them,—ah! Sintram's humility dared scarcely form a hope as to who he might be, however much his features, so noble and soft, called up two highly honored images before his mind.

Then the aged Gotthard Lentz, the king of old men, advanced with a solemn step, and said: "This is the noble boy Engeltram of Montfaucon, the only son of the great baron; and his father and mother send him to you, Sir Sintram, knowing well your holy and glorious knightly career, that you may bring him up to all the honorable and valiant deeds of this northern land, and may make of him a Christian knight, like yourself."

Sintram threw himself from his horse. Engeltram of Montfaucon held the stirrup gracefully for him, checking the retainers, who pressed forward, with these words: "I am the noblest born esquire of this knight, and the service nearest to his person belongs to me."

Sintram knelt in silent prayer on the turf; then lifting up his arms, towards the rising sun, the image of Folko and Gabrielle, he

cried: "With the help of God, my Engeltram, thou wilt become glorious as that sun, and thy course will be like his!"

And Rolf exclaimed as he wept for joy: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

Gotthard Lentz and Rudlieb were pressed to Sintram's heart; the chaplain of Drontheim, who just then came from Verena's cloister to bring a joyful greeting to her brave son, stretched out his hands to bless them all.

PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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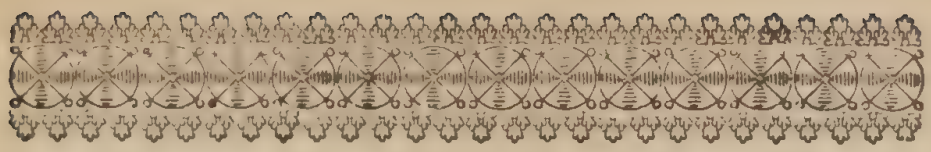
It is difficult to find a path along this wild portion . 12

Thus passed their early childhood 20



PAUL AND VIRGINIA.

ON the eastern coast of the mountain which rises above Port Louis in the Mauritius, upon a piece of land bearing the marks of former cultivation, are seen the ruins of two small cottages. Those ruins are situated near the centre of a valley, formed by immense rocks, and which opens only towards the north. On the left rises the mountain, called the Height of Discovery, from whence the eye marks the distant sail when it first touches the verge of the horizon, and whence the signal is given when a vessel approaches the island. At the foot of this mountain stands the town of Port Louis. On the right is formed the road, which stretches from Port Louis to the Shaddock Grove, where the church, bearing that name, lifts its head, surrounded by its avenues of bamboo, in the midst of a spacious plain; and the prospect terminates in a forest extending to the furthest bounds of the island. The front view presents the bay, denominated the Bay of the Tomb. A little on the right is seen the Cape of Misfortune; and beyond rolls the ex-

panded ocean, on the surface of which appear a few uninhabited islands, and, among others, the Point of Endeavor, which resembles a bastion built upon the flood.

At the entrance of the valley which presents those various objects, the echoes of the mountain incessantly repeat the hollow murmurs of the winds that shake the neighboring forests, and the tumultuous dashing of the waves which break at a distance upon the cliffs. But near the ruined cottages all is calm and still, and the only objects which there meet the eye are rude steep rocks that rise like a surrounding rampart. Large clumps of trees grow at their base, on their rifted sides, and even on their majestic tops, where the clouds seem to repose. The showers which their bold points attract, often paint the vivid colors of the rainbow on their green and brown declivities, and swell the sources of the little river which flows at their feet, called the river of Fan-Palms.

Within this enclosure reigns the most profound silence. The waters, the air, all the elements are at peace. Scarcely does the echo repeat the whispers of the palm trees spreading their broad leaves, the long points of which are gently balanced by the winds. A soft light illuminates the bottom of this deep valley, on which the sun shines only at noon. But even at break of day the rays of light are thrown on the surrounding rocks, and their sharp peaks, rising above the shadows of the mountain, appear like tints of gold and purple gleaming upon the azure sky.

To this scene I loved to resort, where I might enjoy at once the richness of the extensive landscape and the charm of uninterrupted solitude. One day when I was seated at the foot of the cottages, and contemplating their ruins, a man advanced in years passed near the spot. He was dressed in the ancient garb of the island, his feet were bare, and he leaned upon a staff of ebony; his hair was white and the expression of his countenance was dignified and interesting. I bowed to him with respect; he returned the salutation; and after looking at me with some earnestness, came and placed himself upon the hillock where I was seated. Encouraged by this mark of confidence, I thus addressed him:

"Father, can you tell me to whom those cottages once belonged?" "My son," replied the old man, "those heaps of rubbish and that untilled land were, twenty years ago, the property of two families, who then found happiness in this solitude. Their history is affecting; but what European, pursuing his way to the Indies, will pause one moment to interest himself in the fate of a few obscure individuals? What European can picture happiness to his imagination amidst poverty and neglect? The curiosity of mankind is only attracted by the history of the great, and yet from that knowledge little use can be derived." "Father," I rejoined, "from your manners and your observations, I perceive that you have acquired much experience of human life. If you have leisure, relate to me, I beseech you, the history of the ancient

inhabitants of this desert; and be assured that even the men who are most perverted by the prejudices of the world find a soothing pleasure in contemplating that happiness which belongs to simplicity and virtue." The old man, after a short silence, during which he leaned his face upon his hands, as if he were trying to recall the images of the past, thus began his narration: —

MONSIEUR de la Tour, a young man who was a native of Normandy, after having in vain solicited a commission in the French army, or some support from his own family, at length determined to seek his fortune in this island, where he arrived in 1726. He brought hither a young woman whom he loved tenderly, and by whom he was no less tenderly beloved. She belonged to a rich and ancient family of the same province, but he had married her without fortune and in opposition to the will of her relations, who refused their consent because he was found guilty of being descended from parents who had no claims to nobility. Monsieur de la Tour, leaving his wife at Port Louis, embarked for Madagascar, in order to purchase a few slaves to assist him in forming a plantation in this island. He landed at that unhealthy season which commences about the middle of October, and soon after his arrival died of the pestilential fever which prevails in that country six months of the year, and which will forever baffle the attempts of the European nations to form establishments on that fatal

soil. His effects were seized upon by the rapacity of strangers, and his wife, who was pregnant, found herself a widow in a country where she had neither credit nor recommendation and no earthly possession, or rather support, than one negro woman. Too delicate to solicit protection or relief from any other man after the death of him whom alone she loved, misfortune armed her with courage, and she resolved to cultivate with her slave a little spot of ground and procure for herself the means of subsistence. In an island almost a desert, and where the ground was left to the choice of the settler, she avoided those spots which were most fertile and most favorable to commerce; and seeking some nook of the mountain, some secret asylum, where she might live solitary and unknown, she bent her way from the town towards those rocks, where she wished to shelter herself as in a nest. All suffering creatures, from a sort of common instinct, fly for refuge amidst their pains to haunts the most wild and desolate; as if rocks could form a rampart against misfortune,— as if the calm of nature could hush the tumults of the soul. That Providence which lends its support when we ask but the supply of our necessary wants had a blessing in reserve for Madame de la Tour which neither riches nor greatness can purchase; this blessing was a friend.

The spot to which Madame de la Tour fled had already been inhabited a year by a young woman of a lively, good natured and affectionate

disposition. Margaret (for that was her name) was born in Brittany, of a family of peasants, by whom she was cherished and beloved, and with whom she might have passed life in simple rustic happiness if, misled by the weakness of a tender heart, she had not listened to the passion of a gentleman in the neighborhood, who promised her marriage. He soon abandoned her, and adding inhumanity to seduction, refused to insure a provision for the child of which she was pregnant. Margaret then determined to leave forever her native village, and go, where her fault might be concealed, to some colony distant from that country where she had lost the only portion of a poor peasant girl, — her reputation. With some borrowed money she purchased an old negro slave, with whom she cultivated a little spot of this canton. Here Madame de la Tour, followed by her negro woman, found Margaret suckling her child. Soothed by the sight of a person in a situation somewhat similar to her own, Madame de la Tour related in a few words her past condition and her present wants. Margaret was deeply affected by the recital, and more anxious to excite confidence than esteem, she confessed without disguise the errors of which she had been guilty. "As for me," said she, "I deserve my fate; but you, madam — you! at once virtuous and unhappy — " And, sobbing, she offered Madame de la Tour both her hut and her friendship. That lady, affected by this tender reception, pressed her in her arms, and exclaimed: "Ah! surely Heaven will put an end

to my misfortunes, since it inspires you, to whom I am a stranger, with more goodness towards me than I have ever experienced from my own relations?"

I knew Margaret, and although my habitation is a league and a half from hence, in the woods behind that sloping mountain, I considered myself as her neighbor. In the cities of Europe a street, sometimes even a less distance, separates families whom nature had united; but in new colonies we consider those persons as neighbors from whom we are divided only by woods and mountains; and above all, at that period when this island had little intercourse with the Indies, neighborhood alone gave a claim to friendship, and hospitality towards strangers seemed less a duty than a pleasure. No sooner was I informed that Margaret had found a companion than I hastened thither in hope of being useful to my neighbor and her guest.

Madame de la Tour possessed all those melancholy graces which give beauty additional power, by blending sympathy with admiration. Her figure was interesting, and her countenance expressed at once dignity and dejection. She appeared to be in the last stage of her pregnancy. I told them that, for the future interests of their children, and to prevent the intrusion of any other settler, it was necessary they should divide between them the property of this wild sequestered valley, which is nearly twenty acres in extent. They confided that task to me, and I marked out two equal por-

tions of land. One includes the higher part of this enclosure, from the peak of that rock buried in clouds, whence springs the rapid river of Fan-Palms, to that wide cleft which you see on the summit of the mountain, and which is called the Cannon's Mouth, from the resemblance in its form. It is difficult to find a path along this wild portion of enclosure, the soil of which is encumbered with fragments of rock, or worn into channels formed by torrents; yet it produces noble trees, and innumerable fountains and rivulets. The other portion of land is comprised in the plain extending along the banks of the river of Fan-Palms, to the opening where we are now seated, from whence the river takes its course between those two hills until it falls into the sea. You may still trace the vestiges of some meadow land; and this part of the common is less rugged but not more valuable than the other, since in the rainy season it becomes marshy, and in dry weather is so hard and unbending that it will yield only to the stroke of the hatchet. When I had thus divided the property, I persuaded my neighbors to draw lots for their separate possessions. The higher portion of land became the property of Madame de la Tour; the lower, of Margaret; and each seemed satisfied with her respective share. They entreated me to place their habitations together, that they might at all times enjoy the soothing intercourse of friendship, and the consolation of mutual kind offices. Margaret's cottage was situated near the centre of the valley, and just on the bound-

ary of her own plantation. Close to that spot I built another cottage for the dwelling of Madame de la Tour; and thus the two friends, while they possessed all the advantages of neighborhood, lived on their own property. I myself cut palisades from the mountain, and brought leaves of fan palms from the sea shore, in order to construct those two cottages, of which you can now discern neither the entrance nor the roof. Yet, alas! there still remain but too many traces for my remembrance. Time, which so rapidly destroys the proud monuments of empires, seems in this desert to spare those of friendship, as if to perpetuate my regrets to the last hour of my existence.

Scarcely was her cottage finished when Madame de la Tour was delivered of a girl. I had been the godfather of Margaret's child, who was christened by the name of Paul. Madame de la Tour desired me to perform the same office for her child also, together with her friend, who gave her the name of Virginia. "She will be virtuous," cried Margaret, "and she will be happy. I have only known misfortune by wandering from virtue."

At the time Madame de la Tour recovered, those two little territories had already begun to yield some produce, perhaps in a small degree owing to the care which I occasionally bestowed on their improvement, but far more to the indefatigable labors of the two slaves. Margaret's slave, who was called Domingo, was still healthy and robust, although advanced in years; he possessed some knowledge, and

a good natural understanding. He cultivated indiscriminately on both settlements such spots of ground as were most fertile, and sowed whatever grain he thought most congenial to each particular soil. Where the ground was poor, he strewed maize; where it was most fruitful, he planted wheat; and rice in such spots as were marshy. He threw the seeds of gourds and cucumbers at the foot of the rocks, which they loved to climb and decorate with their luxuriant foliage. In dry spots he cultivated the sweet potato. The cotton tree flourished upon the heights, and the sugar cane grew in the clayey soil. He reared some plants of coffee on the hills, where the grain, though small, is excellent. The plantain trees, which spread their grateful shade on the banks of the river, and encircled the cottage, yielded fruit throughout the year. And, lastly, Domingo cultivated a few plants of tobacco to charm away his own cares. Sometimes he was employed in cutting wood for firing from the mountain, sometimes in hewing pieces of rock within the enclosure, in order to level the paths. He was much attached to Margaret, and not less to Madame de la Tour, whose negro woman, Mary, he had married at the time of Virginia's birth; and he was passionately fond of his wife. Mary was born at Madagascar, from whence she had brought a few arts of industry. She could weave baskets, and a sort of stuff with long grass that grows in the woods. She was active, cleanly, and, above all, faithful. It was her care to prepare their meals, to rear the poultry,

and go sometimes to Port Louis and sell the superfluities of these little plantations, which were not very considerable. If you add to the personages I have already mentioned two goats which were brought up with the children, and a great dog, which kept watch at night, you will have a complete idea of the household, as well as of the revenue of those two farms.

Madame de la Tour and her friend were employed from the morning till the evening in spinning cotton for the use of their families. Destitute of all those things which their own industry could not supply, they walked about their habitations with their feet bare, and shoes were a convenience reserved for Sunday, when, at an early hour, they attended mass at the church of the Shaddock Grove, which you see yonder. That church is far more distant than Port Louis; yet they seldom visited the town, lest they should be treated with contempt, because they were dressed in the coarse blue linen of Bengal, which is usually worn by slaves. But is there in that external deference which fortune commands a compensation for domestic happiness? If they had something to suffer from the world, this served but to endear their humble home. No sooner did Mary and Domingo perceive them from this elevated spot, on the road of the Shaddock Grove, than they flew to the foot of the mountain, in order to help them to ascend. They discerned in the looks of their domestics that joy which their return inspired. They found in their retreat neatness, independence, all those blessings

which are the recompense of toil, and received those services which have their source in affection. United by the ties of similar wants, and the sympathy of similar misfortunes, they gave each other the tender names of companion, friend, sister. They had but one will, one interest, one table. All their possessions were in common. And if sometimes a passion more ardent than friendship awakened in their hearts the pang of unavailing anguish, a pure religion, united with chaste manners, drew their affections towards another life,—as the trembling flame rises towards heaven when it no longer finds any aliment on earth.

Madame de la Tour sometimes, leaving the household cares to Margaret, wandered out alone, and amidst the sublime scenery indulged that luxury of pensive sadness which is so soothing to the mind after the first emotions of turbulent sorrow have subsided.

Sometimes she poured forth the effusions of melancholy in the language of verse, and, although her compositions have little poetical merit, they appear to me to bear the marks of genuine sensibility. Many of her poems are lost, but some still remain in my possession, and a few still hang on my memory. I will repeat to you a sonnet addressed to Love:—

SONNET TO LOVE.

Ah, Love! ere yet I knew thy fatal power,
Bright glowed the color of my youthful days,
As, on the sultry zone, the torrid rays,
That paint the broad-leaved plantain's glossy bower:
Calm was my bosom as this silent hour,

When o'er the deep, scarce heard, the zephyr strays,
'Midst the cool tam'rinds indolently plays,
Nor from the orange shakes its od'rous flower:
But, ah! since Love has all my heart possessed,
That desolated heart what sorrows tear!
Disturbed, and wild as ocean's troubled breast,
When the hoarse tempest of the night is there!
Yet my complaining spirit asks no rest;
This bleeding bosom cherishes despair.

The tender and sacred duties which nature imposed became a source of additional happiness to those affectionate mothers, whose mutual friendship acquired new strength at the sight of their children, alike the offspring of unhappy love. They delighted to place their infants together in the same bath, to nurse them in the same cradle, and sometimes changed the maternal bosom at which they received nourishment, as if to blend with the ties of friendship that instinctive affection which this act produces. "My friend," cried Madame de la Tour, "we shall each of us have two children, and each of our two children will have two mothers." As two buds which remain on two trees of the same kind, after the tempest has broken all their branches, produce more delicious fruit if each, separated from the maternal stem, be grafted on the neighboring tree, so those two children, deprived of all other support, imbibed sentiments more tender than those of son and daughter, brother and sister, when exchanged at the breast of those who had given them birth.

While they were yet in their cradle, their mothers talked of their marriage; and this

prospect of conjugal felicity with which they soothed their own cares often called forth the tears of bitter regret. The misfortunes of one mother had arisen from having neglected marriage, those of the other from having submitted to its laws; one had been made unhappy by attempting to raise herself above her humble condition of life, the other by descending from her rank. But they found consolation in reflecting that their more fortunate children, far from the cruel prejudices of Europe, those prejudices which poison the most precious sources of our happiness, would enjoy at once the pleasures of love and the blessings of equality.

Nothing could exceed the attachment which those infants already displayed for each other. If Paul complained his mother pointed to Virginia, and at that sight he smiled and was appeased. If any accident befell Virginia, the cries of Paul gave notice of the disaster, and then Virginia would suppress her complaints when she found that Paul was unhappy. When I came hither I usually found them quite naked, which is the custom of this country, tottering in their walk, and holding each other by the hands and under the arms, as we represent the constellation of the Twins. At night these infants often refused to be separated, and were found lying in the same cradle, their cheeks, their bosoms pressed close together, their hands thrown around each other's neck, and sleeping locked in one another's arms.

When they began to speak, the first names

they learned to give each other were those of brother and sister, and childhood knows no softer appellation. Their education served to augment their early friendship by directing it to the supply of their reciprocal wants. In a short time, all that regarded the household economy, the care of preparing the rural repasts, became the task of Virginia, whose labors were always crowned with the praises and kisses of her brother. As for Paul, always in motion, he dug the garden with Domingo, or followed him with a little hatchet into the woods, where, if in his rambles he espied a beautiful flower, fine fruit, or a nest of birds, even at the top of a tree, he climbed up and brought it home to his sister.

When you met with one of these children, you might be sure the other was not distant One day, coming down that mountain, I saw Virginia at the end of the garden, running towards the house, with her petticoat thrown over her head, in order to screen herself from a shower of rain. At a distance I thought she was alone; but as I hastened towards her, in order to help her on, I perceived that she held Paul by the arm, who was almost entirely enveloped in the same canopy, and both were laughing heartily at being sheltered together under an umbrella of their own invention. Those two charming faces, placed within the petticoat, swelled by the wind, recalled to my mind the children of Leda, enclosed within the same shell.

Their sole study was how to please and assist

each other, for of all other things they were ignorant, and knew neither how to read nor write. They were never disturbed by researches into past times, nor did their curiosity extend beyond the bounds of that mountain. They believed the world ended at the shores of their own island, and all their ideas and affections were confined within its limits. Their mutual tenderness, and that of their mothers, employed all the activity of their souls. Their tears had never been called forth by long application to useless sciences. Their minds had never been wearied by lessons of morality, superfluous to bosoms unconscious of ill. They had never been taught that they must not steal, because every thing with them was in common; or be intemperate, because their simple food was left to their own discretion; or false, because they had no truth to conceal. Their young imaginations had never been terrified by the idea that God has punishments in store for ungrateful children, since with them filial affection arose naturally from maternal fondness. All they had been taught of religion was to love it; and if they did not offer up long prayers in the church, wherever they were, in the house, in the fields, in the woods, they raised towards Heaven their innocent hands, and their hearts purified by virtuous affections.

Thus passed their early childhood, like a beautiful dawn, the prelude of a bright day.

Already they partook with their mothers the cares of the household. As soon as the cry of the wakeful cock announced the first beam of

the morning, Virginia arose and hastened to draw water from a neighboring spring; then returning to the house, she prepared the breakfast. When the rising sun lighted up the points of those rocks which overhang this enclosure, Margaret and her child went to the dwelling of Madame de la Tour, and they offered up together their morning prayer. This sacrifice of thanksgiving always preceded their first repast, which they often partook before the door of the cottage, seated upon the grass, under a canopy of plantain; and while the branches of that delightful tree afforded a grateful shade, its solid fruit furnished food ready prepared by nature; and its long glossy leaves, spread upon the table, supplied the want of linen.

Plentiful and wholesome nourishment gave early growth and vigor to the persons of those children, and their countenances expressed the purity and the peace of their souls. At twelve years of age the figure of Virginia was in some degree formed; a profusion of light hair shaded her face, to which her blue eyes and coral lips gave the most charming brilliancy. Her eyes sparkled with vivacity when she spoke; but when she was silent her look had a cast upwards which gave it an expression of extreme sensibility, or rather of tender melancholy. Already the figure of Paul displayed the graces of manly beauty. He was taller than Virginia; his skin was of a darker tint, his nose more aquiline, and his black eyes would have been too piercing if the long eye-

lashes by which they were shaded had not given them a look of softness. He was constantly in motion, except when his sister appeared, and then, placed at her side, he became quiet. Their meals often passed in silence, and from the grace of their attitudes, the beautiful proportions of their figures, and their naked feet, you might have fancied you beheld an antique group of white marble, representing some of the children of Niobe, if those eyes which sought to meet those smiles which were answered by smiles of the most tender softness had not rather given you the idea of those happy celestial spirits whose nature is love, and who are not obliged to have recourse to words for the expression of that intuitive sentiment. In the mean time, Madame de la Tour, perceiving every day some unfolding grace, some new beauty in her daughter, felt her maternal anxiety increase with her tenderness. She often said to me: "If I should die, what will become of Virginia without fortune?"

Madame de la Tour had an aunt in France, who was a woman of quality, rich, old, and a great bigot. She had behaved towards her niece with so much cruelty upon her marriage that Madame de la Tour had determined that no distress or misfortune should ever compel her to have recourse to her hard-hearted relation. But when she became a mother, the pride of resentment was stifled in the stronger feelings of maternal tenderness. She wrote to her aunt, informing her of the sudden death of her husband, the birth of her daughter, and

the difficulties in which she was involved at a distance from her own country, without support, and burdened with a child. She received no answer, but notwithstanding that high spirit which was natural to her character, she no longer feared exposing herself to mortification and reproach; and although she knew her relation would never pardon her for having married a man of merit but not of noble birth, she continued to write to her by every opportunity in the hope of awakening her compassion for Virginia. Many years, however, passed, during which she received not the smallest testimony of her remembrance.

At length, in 1738, three years after the arrival of Monsieur de la Bourdonnais in this island, Madame de la Tour was informed that the governor had a letter to give her from her aunt. She flew to Port Louis, careless on this occasion of appearing in her homely garment. Maternal hope and joy subdued all those little considerations which are lost when the mind is absorbed by any powerful sentiment. Monsieur de la Bourdonnais delivered to her the letter from her aunt, who informed her that she deserved her fate for having married an adventurer and a libertine; that misplaced passions brought along with them their own punishment, and that the sudden death of her husband must be considered as a visitation from Heaven; that she had done well in going to a distant island rather than dishonor her family by remaining in France; and that, after all, in the colony where she had taken refuge,

every person grew rich except the idle. Having thus lavished sufficient censure upon the conduct of her niece, she finished by a eulogium on herself. To avoid, she said, the almost inevitable evils of marriage, she had determined to remain in a single state. In truth, being of a very ambitious temper, she had resolved only to unite herself to a man of high rank: and although she was very rich, her fortune was not found even a sufficient bribe, even at court, to counterbalance the malignant disposition of her mind and the disagreeable qualities of her person.

She added in a postscript, that, after mature deliberation, she had strongly recommended her niece to Monsieur de la Bourdonnais. This she had indeed done, but in a manner of late too common, and which renders a patron perhaps even more formidable than a declared enemy, for in order to justify herself, she had cruelly slandered her niece, while she affected to pity her misfortunes.

Madame de la Tour, whom no unprejudiced person could have seen without feeling sympathy and respect, was received with the utmost coolness by Monsieur de la Bourdonnais; and when she painted to him her own situation, and that of her child, he replied: "We will see what can be done, — there are so many to relieve, — why did you affront so respectable a relation? You have been much to blame."

Madame de la Tour returned to her cottage, her bosom throbbing with all the bitterness of disappointment. When she arrived, she threw

herself on a chair, and then flinging her aunt's letter on the table, exclaimed to her friend: "This is the recompense of eleven years of patient expectation!" As Madame de la Tour was the only person in the little circle who could read, she again took up the letter, which she read aloud. Scarcely had she finished, when Margaret exclaimed: "What have we to do with your relations? Has God then forsaken us? He only is our father! Have we not hitherto been happy? Why then this regret? You have no courage." Seeing Madame de la Tour in tears, she threw herself upon her neck and pressing her in her arms, "My dear friend!" cried she; "my dear friend!" But her emotion choked her utterance.

At this sight Virginia burst into tears, and pressed her mother's hand and Margaret's alternately to her lips and to her heart; while Paul with his eyes enflamed with anger, cried, clasped his hands together, and stamped with his feet, not knowing whom to blame for this scene of misery. The noise soon led Domingo and Mary to the spot, and the little habitation resounded with the cries of distress. "Ah, madame! My good mistress! My dear mother! Do not weep!"

Those tender proofs of affection at length dispelled Madame de la Tour's sorrow. She took Paul and Virginia in her arms, and embracing them, cried: "You are the cause of my affliction, and yet my only source of delight! Yes, my dear children, misfortune has reached me from a distance, but surely I am surrounded

by happiness." Paul and Virginia did not understand this reflection, but when they saw that she was calm, they smiled, and continued to caress her. Thus tranquillity was restored, and what had passed proved but a transient storm, which serves to give fresh verdure to a beautiful spring.

Although Madame de la Tour appeared calm in the presence of her family, she sometimes communicated to me the feelings that preyed upon her mind, and soon after this period gave me the following sonnet:—

SONNET TO DISAPPOINTMENT.

Pale Disappointment! at thy freezing name
Chill fears in every shivering vein I prove;
My sinking pulse almost forgets to move,
And life almost forsakes my languid frame:
Yet thee, relentless nymph! no more I blame:
Why do my thoughts 'midst vain illusions rove?
Why gild the charms of friendship and of love
With the warm glow of fancy's purple flame?
When ruffling winds have some bright fane o'erthrown,
Which shone on painted clouds, or seemed to shine,
Shall the fond gazer dream for him alone
Those clouds were stable, and at fate repine?
I feel, alas! the fault is all my own,
And, ah! the cruel punishment is mine!

The amiable disposition of those children unfolded itself daily. On a Sunday, their mothers having gone at break of day to mass, at the church of the Shaddock Grove, the children perceived a negro woman beneath the plantains which shaded their habitation. She appeared almost wasted to a skeleton, and had no other garment than a shred of coarse cloth

thrown across her loins. She flung herself at Virginia's feet, who was preparing the family breakfast, and cried: "My good young lady, have pity on a poor slave. For a whole month I have wandered amongst these mountains, half dead with hunger, and often pursued by the hunters and their dogs. I fled from my master, a rich planter of the Black River, who has used me as you see"; and she showed her body marked by deep scars from the lashes she had received. She added: "I was going to drown myself, but hearing you lived here, I said to myself, Since there are still some good white people in this country, I need not die yet."

Virginia answered with emotion: "Take courage, unfortunate creature; here is food"; and she gave her the breakfast she had prepared, which the poor slave in a few minutes devoured. When her hunger was appeased, Virginia said to her: "Unhappy woman, will you let me go and ask forgiveness for you of your master? Surely the sight of you will touch him with pity. Will you show me the way?" "Angel of Heaven," answered the poor negro woman, "I will follow you where you please." Virginia called her brother, and begged him to accompany her. The slave led the way, by winding and difficult paths, through the woods, over mountains, which they climbed with difficulty, and across rivers, through which they were obliged to wade. At length they reached the foot of a precipice upon the borders of the Black River. There they perceived a well-built house, surrounded by extensive planta-

tions, and a great number of slaves employed at their various labors. Their master was walking amongst them with a pipe in his mouth, and a switch in his hand. He was a tall, thin figure of a brown complexion; his eyes were sunk in his head, and his dark eyebrows were joined together. Virginia, holding Paul by the hand, drew near, and with much emotion begged him, for the love of God, to pardon his poor slave, who stood trembling a few paces behind. The man at first paid little attention to the children, who he saw were meanly dressed. But when he observed the elegance of Virginia's form, and the profusion of her beautiful light tresses, which had escaped from beneath her blue cap; when he heard the soft tone of her voice, which trembled as well as her own frame while she implored his compassion,—he took the pipe from his mouth and, lifting up his stick, swore with a terrible oath that he pardoned his slave not for the love of Heaven but of her who asked his forgiveness. Virginia made a sign to the slave to approach her master, and instantly sprung away followed by Paul.

They climbed up the precipice they had descended, and, having gained the summit, seated themselves at the foot of a tree, overcome with fatigue, hunger, and thirst. They had left their cottage fasting, and had walked five leagues since break of day. Paul said to Virginia: "My dear sister, it is past noon, and I am sure you are thirsty and hungry; we shall find no dinner here; let us go down the mountain

again, and ask the master of the poor slave for some food." "Oh, no," answered Virginia, "he frightens me too much. Remember what mamma sometimes says: 'The bread of the wicked is like stones in the mouth.'" "What shall we do then?" said Paul; "these trees produce no fruit, and I shall not be able to find even a tamarind or a lemon to refresh you." Scarcely had he pronounced these words when they heard the dashing of waters which fell from a neighboring rock. They ran thither, and, having quenched their thirst at this crystal spring, they gathered a few cresses which grew on the border of the stream.

While they were wandering in the woods in search of more solid nourishment, Virginia spied a young palm tree. The kind of cabbage which is found at the top of this tree, enfolded within its leaves, forms an excellent sustenance; but, although the stalk of the tree was not thicker than a man's leg, it was above sixty feet in height. The wood of this tree is composed of fine filaments, but the bark is so hard that it turns the edge of the hatchet, and Paul was not even furnished with a knife. At length he thought of setting fire to the palm tree; but a new difficulty occurred, he had no steel with which to strike fire, and although the whole island is covered with rocks, I do not believe it possible to find a flint. Necessity, however, is fertile in expedients, and the most useful inventions have arisen from men placed in the most destitute situations. Paul determined to kindle a fire in the manner of the ne-

groes. With the sharp end of a stone he made a small hole in the branch of a tree that was quite dry, which he held between his feet; he then sharpened another dry branch of a different sort of wood, and afterwards placing the piece of pointed wood in the small hole of the branch which he held with his feet, and turning it rapidly between his hands, in a few minutes smoke and sparks of fire issued from the points of contact. Paul then heaped together dried grass and branches, and set fire to the palm tree, which soon fell to the ground. The fire was useful to him in stripping off the long, thick, and pointed leaves within which the cabbage was enclosed.

Paul and Virginia ate part of the cabbage raw, and part dressed upon the ashes, which they found equally palatable. They made this frugal repast with delight, from the remembrance of the benevolent action they had performed in the morning; yet their joy was embittered by the thoughts of that uneasiness which their long absence would give their mothers. Virginia often recurred to this subject; but Paul, who felt his strength renewed by their meal, assured her that it would not be long before they reached home.

After dinner they recollected that they had no guide, and that they were ignorant of the way. Paul, whose spirit was not subdued by difficulties, said to Virginia: "The sun shines full upon our huts at noon; we must pass, as we did this morning, over that mountain with its three points, which you see yonder. Come,

let us go." This mountain is called the Three Peaks. Paul and Virginia descended the precipice of the Black River, on the northern side, and arrived, after an hour's walk, on the banks of a large stream.

Great part of this island is so little known, even now, that many of its rivers and mountains have not yet received a name. The river, on the banks of which our travellers stood, rolls foaming over a bed of rocks. The noise of the water frightened Virginia, and she durst not wade through the stream, Paul therefore took her up in his arms, and went thus loaded over the slippery rocks, which formed the bed of the river, careless of the tumultuous noise of its waters. "Do not be afraid," cried he to Virginia; "I feel very strong with you. If the inhabitant of the Black River had refused you the pardon of his slave, I would have fought with him." "What!" answered Virginia, "with that great wicked man? To what have I exposed you! Gracious heaven! how difficult it is to do good, and it is so easy to do wrong."

When Paul had crossed the river, he wished to continue his journey carrying his sister, and believed he was able to climb in that way the mountain of the Three Peaks, which was still at the distance of half a league; but his strength soon failed, and he was obliged to set down his burden, and to rest himself by her side. Virginia then said to him: "My dear brother, the sun is going down: you have still some strength left, but mine has quite failed: do leave me here, and return home alone to ease the fears of our

mothers." "Oh, no," said Paul, "I will not leave you. If night surprises us in this wood, I will light a fire, and bring down another palm tree; you shall eat the cabbage; and I will form a covering of the leaves to shelter you." In the mean time, Virginia, being a little rested, pulled from the trunk of an old tree, which hung over the bank of the river, some long leaves of hartstongue which grew near its root. With those leaves she made a sort of buskin, with which she covered her feet, that were bleeding from the sharpness of the stony paths; for, in her eager desire to do good, she had forgot to put on her shoes. Feeling her feet cooled by the freshness of the leaves, she broke off a branch of bamboo, and continued her walk, leaning with one hand on the staff, and with the other on Paul.

They walked on slowly through the woods; but from the height of the trees and the thickness of their foliage they soon lost sight of the mountain of the Three Peaks, by which they had directed their course, and even of the sun, which was now setting. At length they wandered, without perceiving it, from the beaten path in which they had hitherto walked, and found themselves in a labyrinth of trees and rocks which appeared to have no opening. Paul made Virginia sit down while he ran backwards and forwards, half frantic, in search of a path which might lead them out of this thick wood; but all his researches were in vain. He climbed to the top of a tree, from whence he hoped at least to discern the mountain of

the Three Peaks; but all he could perceive around him were the tops of trees, some of which were gilded by the last beams of the setting sun. Already the shadows of the mountains were spread over the forests in the valleys. The wind ceased, as it usually does, at the evening hour. The most profound silence reigned in those awful solitudes, which was only interrupted by the cry of the stags who came to repose in that unfrequented spot. Paul, in the hope that some hunter would hear his voice, called out as loud as he was able: "Come, come to the help of Virginia." But the echoes of the forests alone answered his call, and repeated, again and again, "Virginia — Virginia." Paul at length descended from the tree, overcome with fatigue and vexation, and reflected how they might best contrive to pass the night in that desert. But he could find neither a fountain, a palm tree, nor even a branch of dry wood to kindle a fire. He then felt, by experience, the sense of his own weakness, and began to weep. Virginia said to him: "Do not weep, my dear brother, or I shall die with grief. I am the cause of all your sorrow, and of all that our mothers suffer at this moment. I find we ought to do nothing, not even good, without consulting our parents. Oh, I have been very imprudent!" and she began to shed tears. She then said to Paul: "Let us pray to God, my dear brother, and he will hear us."

Scarcely had they finished their prayer when they heard the barking of a dog. "It is the

dog of some hunter," said Paul, "who comes here at night to lay in wait for the stags." Soon after the dog barked again with more violence. "Surely," said Virginia, "it is Fidele, our own dog; yes, I know his voice. Are we then so near home? at the foot of our own mountain?" A moment after Fidele was at their feet, barking, howling, crying, and devouring them with his caresses. Before they had recovered their surprise they saw Domingo running towards them. At the sight of this good old negro, who wept with joy, they began to weep too, without being able to utter one word. When Domingo had recovered himself a little: "Oh, my dear children," cried he, "how miserable have you made your mothers! How much were they astonished when they returned from mass, where I went with them, and not finding you! Mary, who was at work at a little distance, could not tell us where you were gone. I ran backwards and forwards about the plantation, not knowing where to look for you. At last I took some of your old clothes, and showing them to Fidele, the poor animal, as if he understood me, immediately began to scent your path, and conducted me, continually wagging his tail, to the Black River. It was there a planter told me that you had brought back a negro woman, his slave, and that he had granted you her pardon. But what pardon! he showed her to me with her feet chained to a block of wood, and an iron collar with three hooks fastened around her neck!

"From thence Fidele, still on the scent, led me up the precipice of the Black river, where he again stopped and barked with all his might. This was on the brink of a spring, near a fallen palm tree, and close to a fire which was still smoking. At last he led me to this very spot. We are at the foot of the mountain of the Three Peaks, and still four leagues from home. Come, eat and gather strength." He then presented them with cakes, fruits, and a very large gourd filled with a liquor composed of wine, water, lemon juice, sugar and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared. Virginia sighed at the recollection of the poor slave, and at the uneasiness which they had given their mothers. She repeated several times: "Oh, how difficult it is to do good!"

While she and Paul were taking refreshment Domingo kindled a fire, and having sought among the rocks for a particular kind of crooked wood which burns when quite green, throwing out a great blaze, he made a torch, which he lighted, it being already night. But when they prepared to continue their journey, a new difficulty occurred; Paul and Virginia could no longer walk, their feet being violently swelled and inflamed. Domingo knew not whether it were best to leave them and go in search of help or remain and pass the night with them on that spot. "What is become of the time," said he, "when I used to carry you both together in my arms? But now you are grown big and I am grown old." While he was in this perplexity a troop of Maroon

negroes appeared at the distance of twenty paces. The chief of the band approaching Paul and Virginia, said to them: "Good little white people, do not be afraid. We saw you pass this morning with a negro woman of the Black River. You went to ask pardon for her of her wicked master, and we in return for this, will carry you home upon our shoulders." He then made a sign and four of the strongest negroes immediately formed a sort of litter with the branches of trees and lianas, in which having seated Paul and Virginia, they placed it upon their shoulders. Domingo marched in front, carrying his lighted torch, and they proceeded amidst the rejoicings of the whole troop and overwhelmed with their benedictions. Virginia, affected by this scene, said to Paul, with emotion: "O my dear brother! God never leaves a good action without reward."

It was midnight when they arrived at the foot of the mountain on the ridges of which several fires were lighted. Scarcely had they begun to ascend, when they heard voices crying out: "Is it you, my children?" They answered, together with the negroes: "Yes, it is us," and soon after perceived their mothers and Mary coming towards them with lighted sticks in their hands. "Unhappy children!" cried Madame de la Tour; "from whence do you come? What agonies you have made us suffer!" "We come," said Virginia, "from the Black River, where we went to ask pardon for a poor Maroon slave, to whom I gave our breakfast this morning, because she was dying

of hunger; and these Maroon negroes have brought us home." Madame de la Tour embraced her daughter without being able to speak; and Virginia, who felt her face wet with her mother's tears, exclaimed: "You repay me for all the hardships I have suffered." Margaret, in a transport of delight, pressed Paul in her arms, crying: "And you, also, my dear child! you have done a good action." When they reached the hut with their children, they gave plenty of food to the negroes who returned to their woods, after praying the blessing of Heaven might descend on those good white people.

Every day was to those families a day of tranquillity and of happiness. Neither ambition nor envy disturbed their repose. In this island, where, as in all the European colonies, every malignant anecdote is circulated with avidity, their virtues and even their names were unknown. Only when a traveller on the road of the Shaddock Grove inquired of any of the inhabitants of the plain: "Who lives in those two cottages above?" he was always answered, even by those who did not know them: "They are good people." Thus the modest violet, concealed beneath the thorny bushes, sheds its fragrance, while itself remains unseen.

Doing good appeared to those amiable families to be the chief purpose of life. Solitude, far from having blunted their benevolent feelings or rendered their dispositions morose, had left their hearts open to every tender affection

The contemplation of nature filled their minds with enthusiastic delight. They adored the bounty of that Providence which had enabled them to spread abundance and beauty amidst those barren rocks, and to enjoy those pure and simple pleasures which are ever grateful and ever new. It was probably in those dispositions of mind that Madame de la Tour composed the following sonnet: —

SONNET TO SIMPLICITY.

Nymph of the desert! on this lonely shore,
Simplicity, thy blessings still are mine,
And all thou canst not give I pleased resign,
For all beside canst soothe my soul no more.
I ask no lavish heaps to swell my store,
And purchase pleasures far remote from thine.
Ye joys, for which the race of Europe pine,
Ah! not for me your studied grandeur pour:
Let me where yon tall cliffs are rudely piled,
Where towers the palm amidst the mountain trees,
Where pendent from the steep, with graces wild,
The blue liana floats upon the breeze,
Still haunt those bold recesses, Nature's child,
Where thy majestic charms my spirit seize!

Paul, at twelve years of age, was stronger and more intelligent than Europeans are at fifteen, and had embellished the plantations which Domingo had only cultivated. He had gone with him to the neighboring woods, and rooted up young plants of lemon trees, oranges, and tamarinds, the round heads of which are of so fresh a green, together with date palm trees, producing fruit filled with a sweet cream, which has the fine perfume of the orange flower. Those trees, which were already of

a considerable size, he planted around this little enclosure. He had also sown the seeds of many trees which the second year bear flowers or fruit. The agathis, encircled with long clusters of white flowers, which hang upon it like the crystal pendants of a lustre. The Persian lilac, which lifts high in air its grey flax-colored branches. The pappaw tree, the trunk of which, without branches, forms a column set around with green melons, bearing on their heads large leaves like those of the fig tree.

The seeds and kernels of the gum tree, terminalia, mangoes, alligator pears, the guava, the bread tree, and the narrow-leaved eugenia, were planted with profusion; and the greater number of those trees already afforded to their young cultivator both shade and fruit. His industrious hands had diffused the riches of nature even on the most barren parts of the plantation. Several kinds of aloes, the common Indian fig, adorned with yellow flowers spotted with red, and the thorny five-angled touch thistle, grew upon the dark summits of the rocks, and seemed to aim at reaching the long lianas, which, loaded with blue or crimson flowers, hung scattered over the steepest part of the mountain. Those trees were disposed in such a manner that you could command the whole at one view. He had placed in the middle of this hollow the plants of the lowest growth; behind grew the shrubs; then trees of an ordinary height; above which rose majestically the venerable lofty groves which border the circumference. Thus from its centre

this extensive enclosure appeared like a verdant amphitheatre spread with fruits and flowers, containing a variety of vegetables, a chain of meadow land, and fields of rice and corn. In blending those vegetable productions to his own taste, he followed the designs of Nature. Guided by his suggestions, he had thrown upon the rising grounds such seeds as the winds might scatter over the heights, and near the borders of the springs such grains as float upon the waters. Every plant grew in its proper soil, and every spot seemed decorated by her hands. The waters, which rushed from the summits of the rocks, formed in some parts of the valley limped fountains, and in other parts were spread into large clear mirrors, which reflected the bright verdure, the trees in blossom, the bending rocks, and the azure heavens.

Notwithstanding the great irregularity of the ground, most of these plantations were easy of access. We had, indeed, all given him our advice and assistance, in order to accomplish this end. He had formed a path which winded around the valley, and of which various ramifications led from the circumference to the centre. He had drawn some advantage from the most rugged spots; and had blended, in harmonious variety, smooth rocks with the asperities of the soil, and wild with domestic productions. With that immense quantity of rolling stones which now block up those paths, and which are scattered over most of the ground of this island, he formed here and there pyramids: and at their base he laid earth, and

planted the roots of rose bushes, the Barbadoes flower fence, and other shrubs which love to climb the rocks. In a short time those gloomy shapeless pyramids were covered with verdure, or with the glowing tints of the most beautiful flowers. The hollow recesses of aged trees, which bent over the borders of the stream, formed vaulted caves impenetrable to the sun, and where you might enjoy coolness during the heats of the day. That path led to a clump of forest trees, in the centre of which grew a cultivated tree, loaded with fruit. Here was a field ripe with corn, there an orchard. From that avenue you had a view of the cottages; from this, of the inaccessible summit of the mountain. Beneath that tufted bower of gum trees, interwoven with lianas, no object could be discerned even at noon; while the point of the neighboring rock, which projects from the mountain, commanded a view of the whole enclosure, and of the distant oceans, where sometimes we spied a vessel coming from Europe, or returning thither. On this rock the two families assembled in the evening, and enjoyed, in silence, the freshness of the air, the fragrance of the flowers, the murmurs of the fountains, and the last blended harmonies of light and shade.

Nothing could be more agreeable than the names which were bestowed upon some of the charming retreats of this labyrinth. That rock, of which I was speaking, and from which my approach was discerned at a considerable distance, was called the Discovery of Friendship.

Paul and Virginia, amidst their sports, had planted a bamboo on that spot; and whenever they saw me coming, they hoisted a little white handkerchief, by way of signal of my approach, as they had seen a flag hoisted on the neighboring mountain at the sight of a vessel at sea. The idea struck me of engraving an inscription upon the stalk of this reed. Whatever pleasure I have felt during my travels, at the sight of a statue or monument of antiquity, I have felt still more in reading a well written inscription. It seems to me as if a human voice issued from the stone, and, making itself heard through the lapse of ages, addressed man in the midst of a desert, and told him that he was not alone; that other men, on that very spot, have felt, and thought, and suffered like himself. If the inscription belongs to an ancient nation, which no longer exists, it leads the soul through infinite space, and inspires the feeling of its immortality, by showing that a thought has survived the ruins of an empire.

I inscribed then, on the little mast of Paul and Virginia's flag, those lines of Horace: —

> Fratres Helenæ, lucida sidera,
> Ventorumque regat pater,
> Obstrictis aliis, præter Iapyga.

"May the brothers of Helen, lucid stars like you, and the Father of the winds, guide you; and may you only feel the breath of the zephyr."

I engraved this line of Virgil upon the bark of a gum tree, under the shade of which Paul sometimes seated himself, in order to contemplate the agitated sea: —

Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestes!

"Happy art thou, my son, to know only the pastoral divinities."

And above the door of Madame de la Tour's cottage, where the families used to assemble, I placed this line: —

At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita.

"Here is a calm conscience, and a life ignorant of deceit."

But Virginia did not approve of my Latin; she said, that what I had placed at the foot of her weather flag was too long and too learned. "I should have liked better," added she, "to have seen inscribed: *Always agitated, yet ever constant.*"

The sensibility of those happy families extended itself to everything around them. They had given names the most tender to objects in appearance the most indifferent. A border of orange, plantain, and bread trees, planted around a greensward where Virginia and Paul sometimes danced, was called Concord. An old tree, beneath the shade of which Madame de la Tour and Margaret used to relate their misfortunes, was called The Tears wiped away. They gave the names of Brittany and Normandy to little portions of ground, where they had sown corn, strawberries, and peas. Domingo and Mary, wishing, in imitation of their mistresses, to recall the places of their birth in Africa, gave the names of Angola and Foulepointe to the spots where grew the herb with which they wove baskets, and where they had

planted a calbassia tree. Thus with the productions of their respective climates, those exiled families cherished the dear illusions which bind us to our native country, and softened their regrets in a foreign land. Alas! I have seen, animated by a thousand soothing appellations, those trees, those fountains, those stones, which are now overthrown, which now, like the plains of Greece, present nothing but ruins and affecting remembrances.

Neither the neglect of her European friends, nor the delightful romantic spot which she inhabited, could banish from the mind of Madame de la Tour this tender attachment to her native country. While the luxurious fruits of this climate gratified the taste of her family, she delighted to rear those which were more grateful only because they were the productions of her early home. Among other little pieces addressed to flowers and fruits of northern climes, I found the following sonnet to the Strawberry:—

SONNET TO THE STRAWBERRY.

The strawberry blooms upon its lowly bed,—
Plant of my native soil! The lime may fling
More potent fragrance on the zephyr's wing,
The milky cocoa richer juices shed,
The white guava lovelier blossoms spread;
But not, like thee, to fond remembrance bring
The vanished hours of life's enchanting spring.
Short calendar of joys forever fled!
Thou bidst the scenes of childhood rise to view,
The wild wood path which fancy loves to trace,
Where, veiled in leaves, thy fruit, of rosy hue,
Lurked on its pliant stem with modest grace.
But, ah, when thought would later years renew,
Alas! successive sorrows crowd the space.

But perhaps the most charming spot of this enclosure was that which was called the Repose of Virginia. At the foot of the rock which bore the name of the Discovery of Friendship is a nook from whence issues a fountain, forming, near its source, a little spot of marshy soil in the midst of a field of rich grass. At the time Margaret was delivered of Paul, I made her a present of an Indian cocoa which had been given me, and which she planted on the border of this fenny ground, in order that the tree might one day serve to mark the epoch of her son's birth. Madame de la Tour planted another cocoa, with the same view, at the birth of Virginia. Those fruits produced two cocoa trees, which formed all the records of the two families; one was called the tree of Paul, the other the tree of Virginia. They grew in the same proportion as the two young persons, of an unequal height; but they rose, at the end of twelve years, above the cottages. Already their tender stalks were interwoven, and their young branches of cocoas hung over the basin of the fountain. Except this little plantation, the nook of the rock had been left as it was decorated by nature. On its brown and humid sides large plants of maidenhair glistened with their green and dark stars; and tufts of wave-leaved hartstongue, suspended like long ribbons of purpled green, floated on the winds. Near this grew a chain of the Madagascar periwinkle, the flowers of which resemble the gilliflower; and the long podded capsicum, the cloves of which are the color of blood, and more glowing than

coral. The herb of balm, with its leaves within the heart, and the sweet basil, which has the odor of the gilliflower, exhaled the most delicious perfumes. From the steep summit of the mountain hung the graceful lianas, like a floating drapery, forming magnificent canopies of verdure upon the sides of the rocks. The sea birds, allured by the stillness of those retreats, resorted thither to pass the night. At the hour of sunset we perceived the curlew and the stint skimming along the sea-shore; the cardinal poised high in air; and the white bird of the tropic, which abandons, with the star of day, the solitudes of the Indian ocean. Virginia loved to repose upon the border of this fountain, decorated with wild and sublime magnificence. She often seated herself beneath the shade of the two cocoa trees, and there she sometimes led her goats to graze. While she prepared cheeses of their milk, she loved to see them browse on the maidenhair which grew upon the steep sides of the rock, and hang suspended upon one of its cornices, as on a pedestal. Paul, observing that Virginia was fond of this spot, brought thither, from the neighboring forest, a great variety of birds' nests. The old birds, following their young, established themselves in this new colony. Virginia, at stated times, distributed among them grains of rice, millet, and maize. As soon as she appeared, the whistling blackbird, the amadavid bird, the note of which is so soft; the cardinal, the black frigate bird, with its plumage the color of flame, forsook their bushes; the

paroquet, green as an emerald, descended from the neighboring fan palms; the partridge ran along the grass; all advanced promiscuously towards her, like a brood of chickens; and she and Paul delighted to observe their sports, their repasts, and their loves.

Amiable children! thus passed your early days in innocence and in the exercise of benevolence. How many times, on this very spot, have your mothers, pressing you in their arms, blessed Heaven for the consolations your unfolding virtues prepared for their declining years, while already they enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing you begin life under the most happy auspices! How many times, beneath the shade of those rocks, have I partaken with them of your rural repasts, which cost no animal its life! Gourds filled with milk, fresh eggs, cakes of rice placed upon plantain leaves, baskets loaded with mangoes, oranges, dates, pomegranates, pineapples furnished at the same time the most wholesome food, the most beautiful colors, and the most delicious juices.

The conversation was gentle and innocent as the repasts. Paul often talked of the labors of the day and those of the morrow. He was continually forming some plan of accommodation for their little society Here he discovered that the paths were rough, there that the family circle was ill seated; sometimes the young arbors did not afford sufficient shade, and Virginia might be better pleased elsewhere.

In the rainy seasons the two families assembled together in the hut, and employed them

selves in weaving mats of grass and baskets of bamboo. Rakes, spades, and hatchets were ranged along the walls in the most perfect order; and near those instruments of agriculture were placed the productions which were the fruits of labor, — sacks of rice, sheaves of corn, and baskets of the plantain fruit. Some degree of luxury is usually united with plenty, and Virginia was taught by her mother and Margaret to prepare sherbet and cordials from the juice of the sugar cane, the orange, and the citron.

When night came those families supped together by the light of a lamp; after which Madame de la Tour or Margaret related histories of travellers lost during the night in such of the forests of Europe as are infested by banditti; or told a dismal tale of some shipwrecked vessel, thrown by the tempest upon the rocks of a desert island. To these recitals their children listened with eager sensibility and earnestly begged that Heaven would grant they might one day have the joy of showing their hospitality towards such unfortunate persons. At length the two families separated and retired to rest, impatient to meet again the next morning. Sometimes they were lulled to repose by the beating rains which fell in torrents upon the roof of their cottages, and sometimes by the hollow winds, which brought to their ear the distant murmur of the waves breaking upon the shore. They blessed God for their personal safety, of which their

feeling became stronger from the idea of remote danger.

Madame de la Tour occasionally read aloud some affecting history of the Old or New Testament. Her auditors reasoned but little upon those sacred books, for their theology consisted in sentiment, like that of nature; and their morality in action, like that of the gospel. Those families had no particular days devoted to pleasure and others to sadness. Every day was to them a holiday, and all which surrounded them one holy temple, where they forever adored an Infinite Intelligence, the friend of human kind. A sentiment of confidence in his supreme power filled their minds with consolation under the past, with fortitude for the present, and with hope for the future. Thus, compelled by misfortune to return to a state of nature, those women had unfolded in their own bosoms and in those of their children the feelings which are most natural to the human mind, and which are our best support under evil.

But as clouds sometimes arise which cast a gloom over the best regulated tempers, whenever melancholy took possession of any member of this little society, the rest endeavored to banish painful thoughts rather by sentiment than by arguments. Margaret exerted her gayety, Madame de la Tour employed her mild theology, Virginia her tender caresses, Paul his cordial and engaging frankness. Even Mary and Domingo hastened to offer their succor, and to weep with those that wept. Thus

weak plants are interwoven in order to resist the tempests.

During the fine season they went every Sunday to the church of the Shaddock Grove, the steeple of which you see yonder upon the plain. After service the poor often came to require some kind office at their hands. Sometimes an unhappy creature sought their advice, sometimes a child led them to its sick mother in the neighborhood. They always took with them remedies for the ordinary diseases of the country, which they administered in that soothing manner which stamps so much value upon the smallest favors. Above all, they succeeded in banishing the disorders of the mind which are so intolerable in solitude, and under the infirmities of a weakened frame. Madame de la Tour spoke with such sublime confidence of the Divinity that the sick, while listening to her, believed that he was present. Virginia often returned home with her eyes wet with tears, and her heart overflowing with delight, having had an opportunity of doing good. After those visits of charity, they sometimes prolonged their way by the Sloping Mountain till they reached my dwelling, where I had prepared dinner for them upon the banks of the little river which glides near my cottage. I produced on those occasions some bottles of old wine, in order to heighten the gayety of our Indian repast by the cordial productions of Europe. Sometimes we met upon the sea shore, at the mouth of little rivers, which are here scarcely larger than brooks. We brought from the

plantation our vegetable provisions, to which we added such as the sea furnished in great variety. Seated upon a rock, beneath the shade of the velvet sunflower, we heard the mountain billows break at our feet with a dashing noise, and sometimes on that spot we listened to the plaintive strains of the water curlew. Madame de la Tour answered his sorrowful notes in the following sonnet: —

SONNET TO THE CURLEW.

Soothed by the murmurs on the sea-beat shore,
His dun grey plumage floating to the gale,
The curlew blends his melancholy wail,
With those hoarse sounds the rushing waters pour.
Like thee, congenial bird! my steps explore
The bleak lone sea beach, or the rocky dale,
And shun the orange bower, the myrtle vale,
Whose gay luxuriance suits my soul no more.
I love the ocean's broad expanse, when dressed
In limpid clearness, or when tempests blow,
When the smooth currents on its placid breast
Flow calm, as my past moments used to flow;
Or when its troubled waves refuse to rest,
And seem the symbol of my present woe.

Our repasts were succeeded by the songs and dances of the two young people. Virginia sang the happiness of pastoral life, and the misery of those who were impelled, by avarice, to cross the furious ocean, rather than cultivate the earth, and enjoy its peaceful bounties. Sometimes she performed a pantomime with Paul, in the manner of the negroes. The first language of man is pantomime. It is known to all nations, and is so natural and so expressive, that the children of the European inhabitants catch it with facility from the negroes.

Virginia recalling, amongst the histories which her mother had read to her, those which had affected her most, represented the principal events with beautiful simplicity. Sometimes at the sound of Domingo's tantam she appeared upon the greensward, bearing a pitcher upon her head, and advanced with a timid step towards the source of a neighboring fountain to draw water. Domingo and Mary, who personated the shepherds of Midian, forbade her to approach, and repulsed her sternly. Upon which Paul flew to her succor, beat away the shepherds, filled Virginia's pitcher, and placing it upon her head, bound her brows at the same time with a wreath of the red flowers of the Madagascar periwinkle, which served to heighten the delicacy of her skin. Then, joining their sports, I took upon me the part of Raguel, and bestowed upon Paul my daughter Zephora in marriage.

Sometimes Virginia represented the unfortunate Ruth, returning poor and widowed to her own country, where, after so long an absence, she found herself as in a foreign land. Domingo and Mary, personated the reapers. Virginia followed their steps, gleaning here and there a few ears of corn. She was interrogated by Paul with the gravity of a patriarch, and answered, with a faltering voice, his questions. Soon touched with compassion, he granted an asylum to innocence, and hospitality to misfortune. He filled Virginia's lap with plenty; and, leading her towards us as before the old men of the city, declared his pur-

pose to take her in marriage. At this scene, Madame de la Tour, recalling the desolate situation in which she had been left by her relations, her widowhood, the kind reception she had met with from Margaret, succeeded by the soothing hope of a happy union between their children, could not forbear weeping: and the sensations which such recollections excited led the whole audience to pour forth those luxurious tears which have their mingled source in sorrow and in joy.

These dramas were performed with such an air of reality that you might have fancied yourself transported to the plains of Syria or of Palestine. We were not unfurnished with either decorations, lights, or an orchestra, suitable to the representation. The scene was generally placed in an opening of the forest, where such parts of the wood as were penetrable formed around us numerous arcades of foliage, beneath which we were sheltered from the heat during the whole day; but when the sun descended towards the horizon, its rays, broken upon the trunks of the trees, diverged among the shadows of the forest in strong lines of light, which produced the most sublime effect. Sometimes the whole of its broad disk appeared at the end of an avenue, spreading one dazzling mass of brightness. The foliage of the trees, illuminated from beneath by its saffron beams, glowed with the lustre of the topaz and the emerald. Their brown and mossy trunks appeared transformed into columns of antique bronze; and the birds, which had retired in silence to their leafy

shades to pass the night, surprised to see the radiance of a second morning, hailed the star of day with innumerable carols.

Night soon overtook us during those rural entertainments; but the purity of the air, and the mildness of the climate, admitted of our sleeping in the woods secure from the injuries of the weather, and no less secure from the molestation of robbers. At our return the following day to our respective habitations, we found them exactly in the same state in which they had been left. In this island, which then had no commerce, there was so much simplicity and good faith that the doors of several houses were without a key, and a lock was an object of curiosity to many of the natives.

Amid the luxuriant beauty of this favored climate, Madame de la Tour often regretted the quick succession from day to night which takes place between the tropics, and which deprived her pensive mind of that hour of twilight, the softened gloom of which is so soothing and sacred to the feelings of tender melancholy. This regret is expressed in the following sonnet: —

SONNET TO THE TORRID ZONE.

Pathway of light! o'er thy empurpled zone
With lavish charms perennial summer strays;
Soft 'midst thy spicy groves the zephyr plays,
While far around the rich perfumes are thrown:
The amadavid bird for thee alone
Spreads his gay plumes, that catch thy vivid rays;
For thee the gems with liquid lustre blaze,
And Nature's various wealth is all thy own.
But, ah! not thine is twilight's doubtful gloom,

Those mild gradations, mingling day with night;
Here instant darkness shrouds thy genial bloom,
Nor leaves my pensive soul that lingering light,
When musing memory would each trace resume
Of fading pleasures in successive flight.

Paul and Virginia had neither clock nor almanac, nor books of chronology, history, or philosophy. The periods of their lives were related by those of nature. They knew the hours of the day by the shadows of the trees, the seasons by the times when those trees bore flowers or fruit, and the years by the number of their harvests. These soothing images diffused an inexpressible charm over their conversation. "It is time to dine," said Virginia, "the shadows of the plantain trees are at their roots;" or, "night approaches: the tamarinds close their leaves." "When will you come to see us?" inquired some of her companions in the neighborhood. "At the time of the sugar canes," answered Virginia. "Your visit will be then still more delightful," resumed her young acquaintances. When she was asked what was her own age, and that of Paul, "My brother," said she, "is as old as the great cocoa tree of the fountain; and I am as old as the little cocoa tree. The mangoes have borne fruit twelve times, and the orange trees have borne flowers four-and-twenty times, since I came into the world." Their lives seemed linked to the trees like those of fawns or dryads. They knew no other historical epochs than that of the lives of their mothers, no other chronology than that of their orchards, and no other

philosophy than that of doing good, and resigning themselves to the will of Heaven.

Thus grew those children of nature. No care had troubled their peace, no intemperance had corrupted their blood, no misplaced passion had depraved their hearts. Love, innocence, and piety possessed their souls; and those intellectual graces unfolded themselves in their features, their attitudes, and their motions. Still in the morning of life, they had all its blooming freshness; and surely such in the garden of Eden appeared our first parents, when, coming from the hands of God, they first saw, approached, and conversed together, like brother and sister. Virginia was gentle, modest, and confiding as Eve; and Paul, like Adam, united the figure of manhood with the simplicity of a child.

When alone with Virginia, he has a thousand times told me he used to say to her, at his return from labor: "When I am wearied, the sight of you refreshes me. If from the summit of the mountain I perceive you below in the valley, you appear to me in the midst of our orchard like a blushing rosebud. If you go towards our mother's house, the partridge, when it runs to meet its young, has a shape less beautiful, and a step less light. When I lose sight of you through the trees, I have no need to see you in order to find you again. Something of you, I know not how, remains for me in the air where you have passed, in the grass where you have been seated. When I come near you, you delight all my senses. The azure of heaven is

less charming than the blue of your eyes, and the song of the amadavid bird less soft than the sound of your voice. If I only touch you with my finger, my whole frame trembles with pleasure. Do you remember the day when we crossed over the great stones of the river of the Three Peaks? I was very much tired before we reached the bank; but as soon as I had taken you in my arms, I seemed to have wings like a bird. Tell me by what charm you have so enchanted me? Is it by your wisdom? Our mothers have more than either of us. Is it by your caresses? They embrace me much oftener than you. I think it must be by your goodness. I shall never forget how you walked bare footed to the Black River, to ask pardon for the poor wandering slave. Here, my beloved, take this flowering orange branch, which I have culled in the forest; you will place it at night near your bed. Eat this honeycomb, which I have taken for you from the top of a rock. But first lean upon my bosom, and I shall be refreshed."

Virginia then answered: "Oh, my dear brother, the rays of the sun in the morning at the top of the rocks give me less joy than the sight of you. I love my mother, I love yours; but when they call you their son, I love them a thousand times more. When they caress you, I feel it more sensibly than when I am caressed myself. You ask me why you love me. Why, all creatures that are brought up together love one another. Look at our birds reared up in the same nests; they love like us; they are

always together like us. Hark! how they call and answer from one tree to another. So when the echoes bring to my ears the air which you play upon your flute at the top of the mountain, I repeat the words at the bottom of the valley. Above all, you are dear to me since the day when you wanted to fight the master of the slave for me. Since that time how often have I said to myself: 'Ah, my brother has a good heart; but for him, I should have died of terror.' I pray to God every day for my mother and yours; for you, and for our poor servants; but when I pronounce your name, my devotion seems to increase, I ask so earnestly of God that no harm may befall you! Why do you go so far, and climb so high, to seek fruits and flowers for me? How much you are fatigued!" and with her little white handkerchief she wiped the damps from his brow.

For some time past, however, Virginia had felt her heart agitated by new sensations. Her fine blue eyes lost their lustre, her cheeks its freshness, and her frame was seized with universal languor. Serenity no longer sat upon her brow, nor smiles played upon her lips. She became suddenly gay without joy, and melancholy without vexation. She fled her innocent sports, her gentle labors, and the society of her beloved family; wandering along the most unfrequented parts of the plantation, and seeking every where that rest which she could nowhere find. Sometimes, at the sight of Paul, she advanced sportively towards him, and, when going to accost him, was seized wit

sudden confusion; her pale cheeks were overspread with blushes, and her eyes no longer dared to meet those of her brother.

Paul said to her: "The rocks are covered with verdure, our birds begin to sing when you approach, every thing around you is gay, and you only are unhappy." He endeavored to soothe her by his embraces; but she turned away her head and fled trembling towards her mother. The caresses of her brother excited too much emotion in her agitated heart. Paul could not comprehend the meaning of those new and strange caprices.

One of those summers which sometimes desolate the countries situated between the tropics now spread its ravages over this island. It was near the end of December, when the sun in Capricorn darts over Mauritius, during the space of three weeks, its vertical fires. The south wind, which prevails almost throughout the whole year, no longer blew. Vast columns of dust arose from the highways, and hung suspended in the air; the ground was every where broken into clefts; the grass was burnt; hot exhalations issued from the sides of the mountains, and their rivulets for the most part became dry; fiery vapors during the day ascended from the plains, and appeared at the setting of the sun like a conflagration. Night brought no coolness to the heated atmosphere: the orb of the moon seemed of blood, and rising in a misty horizon, appeared of supernatural magnitude. The drooping cattle on the sides of the hills,

stretching out their necks towards heaven, and panting for air, made the valleys re-echo with their melancholy lowings; even the Caffre by whom they were led threw himself upon the earth in search of coolness; but the scorching sun had every where penetrated, and the stifling atmosphere resounded with the buzzing noise of insects who sought to allay their thirst in the blood of men and of animals.

On one of those sultry nights Virginia, restless and unhappy, arose, then went again to rest, but could find in no attitude either slumber or repose. At length she bent her way by the light of the moon towards her fountain, and gazed at its spring which, notwithstanding the drought, still flowed like silver threads down the brown sides of the rock. She flung herself into the basin; its coolness reanimated her spirits, and a thousand soothing remembrances presented themselves to her mind. She recollected that in her infancy her mother and Margaret amused themselves by bathing her with Paul in this very spot; that Paul afterwards, reserving this bath for her use only, had dug its bed, covered the bottom with sand and sown aromatic herbs around the borders. She saw, reflected through the water upon her naked arms and bosom, the two cocoa trees, which were planted at her birth and that of her brother, and which interwove about her head their green branches and young fruit. She thought of Paul's friendship, sweeter than the odors, purer than the waters of the fountain, stronger than the intertwining palm trees, and

she sighed. Reflecting upon the hour of the night and the profound solitude, her imagination again grew disordered. Suddenly she flew affrighted from those dangerous shades, and those waters which she fancied hotter than the torrid sunbeam, and ran to her mother in order to find a refuge from herself. Often, wishing to unfold her sufferings, she pressed her mother's hand within her own; often she was ready to pronounce the name of Paul; but her oppressed heart left not her lips the power of utterance, and leaning her head on her mother's bosom, she could only bathe it with her tears.

Madame de la Tour, though she easily discerned the source of her daughter's uneasiness, did not think proper to speak to her on that subject. "My dear child," said she, "address yourself to God, who disposes at his will of health and life. He tries you now in order to recompense you hereafter. Remember that we are only placed upon earth for the exercise of virtue."

The excessive heat drew vapors from the ocean, which hung over the island like a vast awning, and gathered around the summits of the mountains, while long flakes of fire occasionally issued from their misty peaks. Soon after the most terrible thunder re-echoed through the woods, the plains, and the valleys; the rains fell from the skies like cataracts; foaming torrents rolled down the sides of this mountain; the bottom of the valley became a sea; the plat of ground on which the cottages were built a little island, and the en-

trance of this valley a sluice, along which rushed precipitately the moaning waters, earth, trees, and rocks.

Meantime the trembling family addressed their prayers to God in the cottage of Madame de la Tour, the roof of which cracked horribly from the struggling winds. So vivid and frequent were the lightnings, that, although the doors and window shutters were well fastened, every object without was distinctly seen through the jointed beams. Paul, followed by Domingo, went with intrepidity from one cottage to another, notwithstanding the fury of the tempest; here supporting a partition with a buttress, there driving in a stake, and only returning to the family to calm their fears by the hope that the storm was passing away. Accordingly in the evening the rains ceased, the trade winds of the south pursued their ordinary course, the tempestuous clouds were thrown towards the northeast, and the setting sun appeared in the horizon.

Virginia's first wish was to visit the spot called her Repose. Paul approached her with a timid air, and offered her the assistance of his arm, which she accepted, smiling, and they left the cottage together. The air was fresh and clear; white vapors arose from the ridges of the mountains, furrowed here and there by the foam of the torrents, which were now becoming dry. The garden was altogether destroyed by the hollows which the floods had worn, the roots of the fruit trees were for the most part laid bare, and vast heaps of sand

covered the chain of meadows, and choked up Virginia's bath. The two cocoa trees, however, were still erect, and still retained their freshness; but they were no longer surrounded by turf, or arbors, or birds, except a few amadavid birds, who, upon the points of the neighboring rocks, lamented, in plaintive notes, the loss of their young.

At the sight of this general desolation, Virginia exclaimed to Paul: "You brought birds hither, and the hurricane has killed them. You planted this garden, and it is now destroyed. Every thing then upon earth perishes, and it is only Heaven that is not subject to change." "Why," answered Paul, "why cannot I give you something which belongs to Heaven? but I am possessed of nothing even upon earth." Virginia, blushing, resumed: "You have the picture of Saint Paul." Scarcely had she pronounced the words, when he flew in search of it to his mother's cottage. This picture was a small miniature, representing Paul the Hermit, and which Margaret, who was very pious, had long worn hung at her neck when she was a girl, and which, since she became a mother, she had placed round the neck of her child. It had even happened, that being, while pregnant, abandoned by the whole world, and continually employed in contemplating the image of this benevolent recluse, her offspring had contracted, at least so she fancied, some resemblance to this revered object. She therefore bestowed upon him the name of Paul, giving him for his patron a saint who had passed his life far from

mankind, by whom he had been first deceived, and then forsaken. Virginia, upon receiving this little picture from the hands of Paul, said to him, with emotion: "My dear brother, I will never part with this while I live; nor will I ever forget that you have given me the only thing which you possess in the world." At this tone of friendship, this unhoped-for return of familiarity and tenderness, Paul attempted to embrace her; but, light as a bird, she fled, and left him astonished, and unable to account for a conduct so extraordinary.

Meanwhile Margaret said to Madame de la Tour: "Why do we not unite our children by marriage? They have a tender attachment to each other." Madame de la Tour replied: "They are too young, and too poor. What grief would it occasion us to see Virginia bring into the world unfortunate children, whom she would not perhaps have sufficient strength to rear! Your negro, Domingo, is almost too old to labor; Mary is infirm. As for myself, my dear friend, in the space of fifteen years, I find my strength much failed; age advances rapidly in hot climates, and, above all, under the pressure of misfortune. Paul is our only hope; let us wait till his constitution is strengthened, and till he can support us by his labor; at present you well know that we have only sufficient to supply the wants of the day; but were we to send Paul for a short time to the Indies, commerce would furnish him with the means of purchasing a slave; and at his return we will unite him to Virginia; for I am persuaded no

one on earth can render her as happy as your son. We will consult our neighbor on this subject."

They accordingly asked my advice, and I was of their opinion. "The Indian seas," I observed to them, "are calm, and, in choosing a favorable season, the voyage is seldom longer than six weeks. We will furnish Paul with a little venture in my neighborhood, where he is much beloved. If we were only to supply him with some raw cotton, of which we make no use, for want of mills to work it, some ebony, which is here so common that it serves us for firing, and some rosin, which is found in our woods; all those articles will sell advantageously in the Indies, though to us they are useless."

I engaged to obtain permission from Monsieur de la Bourdonnais to undertake this voyage; but I determined previously to mention the affair to Paul; and my surprise was great when this young man said to me, with a degree of good sense above his age: "And why do you wish me to leave my family for this precarious pursuit of fortune? Is there any commerce more advantageous than the culture of the ground, which yields sometimes fifty or a hundred fold? If we wish to engage in commerce, we can do so by carrying our superfluities to the town, without my wandering to the Indies. Our mothers tell me that Domingo is old and feeble, but I am young, and gather strength every day. If any accident should happen during my absence, above all to Virginia, who already suffers — Oh, no, no! — I cannot resolve to leave them."

This answer threw me into great perplexity, for Madame de la Tour had not concealed from me the situation of Virginia, and the desire of separating those young people for a few years. These ideas I did not dare to suggest to Paul.

At this period a ship, which arrived from France, brought Madame de la Tour a letter from her aunt. Alarmed by the terrors of approaching death, which could alone penetrate a heart so insensible, recovering from a dangerous disorder, which had left her in a state of weakness, rendered incurable by age, she desired that her niece would return to France; or, if her health forbade her to undertake so long a voyage, she conjured her to send Virginia, on whom she would bestow a good education, procure for her a splendid marriage, and leave her the inheritance of her whole fortune. The perusal of this letter spread general consternation through the family. Domingo and Mary began to weep. Paul, motionless with surprise, appeared as if his heart was ready to burst with indignation; while Virginia, fixing her eyes upon her mother, had not power to utter a word.

"And can you now leave us?" cried Margaret to Madame de la Tour. "No, my dear friend, no, my beloved children," replied Madame de la Tour, "I will not leave you. I have lived with you, and with you I will die. I have known no happiness but in your affection. If my health be deranged, my past misfortunes are the cause. My heart deeply wounded by

the cruelty of a relation, and the loss of my husband, has found more consolation and felicity with you beneath these humble huts than all the wealth of my family could now give me in my own country."

At this soothing language every eye overflowed with tears of delight. Paul pressed Madame de la Tour in his arms, exclaiming: "Neither will I leave you! I will not go to the Indies. We will all labor for you, my dear mother; and you shall never feel any wants with us." But of the whole society, the person who displayed the least transport, and who probably felt the most, was Virginia; and, during the remainder of the day, that gentle gayety which flowed from her heart, and proved that her peace was restored, completed the general satisfaction.

The next day, at sunrise, while they were offering up, as usual, their morning sacrifice of praise, which preceded their breakfast, Domingo informed them that a gentleman on horseback, followed by two slaves, was coming towards the plantation. This person was Monsieur de la Bourdonnais. He entered the cottage, where he found the family at breakfast. Virginia had prepared, according to the custom of the country, coffee and rice boiled in water; to which she added hot yams and fresh cocoas. The leaves of the plantain tree supplied the want of table linen; and calbassia shells, split in two, served for utensils. The governor expressed some surprise at the homeliness of the dwelling; then, addressing him-

self to Madame de la Tour, he observed, that although public affairs drew his attention too much from the concerns of individuals, she had many claims to his good offices. "You have an aunt at Paris, madame," he added, "a woman of quality, and immensely rich, who expects that you will hasten to see her, and who means to bestow upon you her whole fortune." Madame de la Tour replied that the state of her health would not permit her to undertake so long a voyage. "At least," resumed Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, "you cannot, without injustice, deprive this amiable young lady, your daughter, of so noble an inheritance. I will not conceal from you that your aunt has made use of her influence to oblige you to return; and that I have received official letters in which I am ordered to exert my authority, if necessary, to that effect. But, as I only wish to employ my power for the purpose of rendering the inhabitants of this colony happy, I expect from your good sense the voluntary sacrifice of a few years, upon which depend your daughter's establishment in the world, and the welfare of your whole life. Wherefore do we come to these islands? Is it not to acquire a fortune? And will it not be more agreeable to return and find it in your own country?"

He then placed a great bag of piastres, which had been brought hither by one of his slaves, upon the table. "This," added he, "is allotted by your aunt for the preparations necessary for the young lady's voyage." Gently reproaching Madame de la Tour for not having had

recourse to him in her difficulties, he extolled at the same time her noble fortitude. Upon this Paul said to the governor: "My mother did address herself to you, sir, and you received her ill." "Have you another child, madame?" said Monsieur de la Bourdonnais to Madame de la Tour. "No, sir," she replied; "this is the child of my friend; but he and Virginia are equally dear to us." "Young man," said the governor to Paul, "when you have acquired a little more experience of the world, you will know that it is the misfortune of people in place to be deceived, and thence to bestow upon intriguing vice that which belongs to modest merit."

Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, at the request of Madame de la Tour, placed himself next her at table, and breakfasted in the manner of the Creoles, upon coffee, mixed with rice, boiled in water. He was delighted with the order and neatness which prevailed in the little cottage, the harmony of the two interesting families, and the zeal of their old servants. "Here," exclaimed he, "I discern only wooden furniture, but I find serene countenances and hearts of gold." Paul, enchanted with the affability of the governor, said to him: "I wish to be your friend: you are a good man." Monsieur de la Bourdonnais received with pleasure this insular compliment, and, taking Paul by the hand, assured him that he might rely upon his friendship.

After breakfast he took Madame de la Tour aside, and informed her that an opportunity

presented itself of sending her daughter to France in a ship which was going to sail in a short time; that he would recommend her to a lady, a relation of his own, who would be a passenger; and that she must not think of renouncing an immense fortune on account of being separated from her daughter a few years. "Your aunt," he added, "cannot live more than two years; of this I am assured by her friends. Think of it seriously. Fortune does not visit us every day. Consult your friends. Every person of good sense will be of my opinion." She answered: "that, desiring no other happiness henceforth in the world than that of her daughter, she would leave her departure for France entirely to her own inclination."

Madame de la Tour was not sorry to find an opportunity of separating Paul and Virginia for a short time, and provide, by this means, for their mutual felicity at a future period. She took her daughter aside, and said to her: "My dear child, our servants are now old. Paul is still very young; Margaret is advanced in years, and I am already infirm. If I should die, what will become of you, without fortune, in the midst of these deserts? You will then be left alone without any person who can afford you much succor, and forced to labor without ceasing, in order to support your wretched existence. This idea fills my soul with sorrow." Virginia answered: "God has appointed us to labor. You have taught me to labor and to bless him every day. He never has forsaken

us, he never will forsake us. His providence peculiarly watches the unfortunate. You have told me this often, my dear mother. I cannot resolve to leave you. Madame de la Tour replied, with much emotion: "I have no other aim than to render you happy, and to marry you one day to Paul, who is not your brother. Reflect at present that his fortune depends upon you."

A young girl who loves believes that all the world is ignorant of her passion; she throws over her eyes the veil which she has thrown over her heart; but when it is lifted up by some cherishing hand, the secret inquietudes of passion suddenly burst their bounds, and the soothing overflowings of confidence succeed that reserve and mystery with which the oppressed heart had enveloped its feelings. Virginia, deeply affected by this new proof of her mother's tenderness, related to her how cruel had been those struggles which Heaven alone had witnessed; declared that she saw the succor of Providence in that of an affectionate mother who approved of her attachment, and would guide her by her counsels; that being now strengthened by such support, every consideration led her to remain with her mother, without anxiety for the present and without apprehension for the future.

Madame de la Tour, perceiving that this confidential conversation had produced an effect altogether different from that which she expected, said: "My dear child, I will not any more constrain your inclination; deliberate at

leisure, but conceal your feelings from Paul."

Towards evening, when Madame de la Tour and Virginia were again together, their confessor, who was a missionary in the island, entered the room, having been sent by the governor. "My children," he exclaimed as he entered, "God be praised! you are now rich. You can now listen to the kind suggestion of your excellent hearts, and do good to the poor. I know what Monsieur de la Bourdonnais has said to you, and what you have answered. Your health, dear madam, obliges you to remain here; but you, young lady, are without excuse. We must obey the will of Providence; and we must also obey our aged relations, even when they are unjust. A sacrifice is required of you, but it is the order of God. He devoted himself for you; and you, in imitation of his example, must devote yourself for the welfare of your family. Your voyage to France will have a happy termination. You will surely consent to go, my dear young lady."

Virginia, with downcast eyes, answered, trembling: "If it be the command of God, I will not presume to oppose it. Let the will of God be done!" said she, weeping.

The priest went away, and informed the governor of the success of his mission. In the mean time, Madame de la Tour sent Domingo to desire I would come hither, that she might consult me upon Virginia's departure. I was of opinion that she ought not to go. I consider it as a fixed principle of happiness that we ought to prefer the advantages of nature to

those of fortune; and never go in search of that at a distance which we may find in our own bosoms. But what could be expected from my moderate counsels, opposed to the illusions of a splendid fortune; and my simple reasoning, contradicted by the prejudices of the world, and an authority which Madame de la Tour held sacred? This lady had only consulted me from a sentiment of respect, and had in reality ceased to deliberate, since she had heard the decision of her confessor. Margaret herself, who, notwithstanding the advantages she hoped for her son from the possession of Virginia's fortune, had hitherto opposed her departure, made no further objections. As for Paul, ignorant of what was decided, and alarmed at the secret conversation which Madame de la Tour held with her daughter, he abandoned himself to deep melancholy. "They are plotting something against my peace," cried he, "since they are so careful of concealment."

A report having in the mean time been spread over the island that fortune had visited those rocks, we beheld merchants of all kinds climbing their steep ascent, and displaying in those humble huts the richest stuffs of India. The fine dimity of Gondelore, the handkerchiefs of Pellicate and Mussulapatan, the plain striped and embroidered muslins of Decca, clear as the day. Those merchants unrolled the gorgeous silks of China, white satin damasks, others of grass green and bright red; rose-colored taffetas, a profusion of satins, pelongs,

and gauze of Tonquin, some plain, and some beautifully decorated with flowers; the soft pekins, downy like cloth; white and yellow nankeens, and the calicoes of Madagascar.

Madame de la Tour wished her daughter to purchase everything she liked; and Virginia made choice of whatever she believed would be agreeable to her mother, Margaret, and her son. "This," said she, "will serve for furniture, and that will be useful to Mary and Domingo." In short, the bag of piastres was emptied before she had considered her own wants; and she was obliged to receive a share of the presents which she had distributed to the family circle.

Paul, penetrated with sorrow at the sight of those gifts of fortune, which he felt were the presage of Virginia's departure, came a few days after to my dwelling. With an air of despondency he said to me: "My sister is going; they are already making preparations for her voyage. I conjure you to come and exert your influence over her mother and mine, in order to detain her here." I could not refuse the young man's solicitations, although well convinced that my representations would be unavailing.

If Virginia had appeared to me charming when clad in the blue cloth of Bengal, with a red handkerchief tied around her head, how much was her beauty improved when decorated with the graceful ornaments worn by the ladies of this country! She was dressed in white muslin, lined with rose-colored taffeta

Her small and elegant shape was displayed to advantage by her corset, and the lavish profusion of her light tresses were carelessly blended with her simple head-dress. Her fine blue eyes were filled with an expression of melancholy; and the struggles of passion, with which her heart was agitated, flushed her cheek, and gave her voice a tone of emotion. The contrast between her pensive look and her gay habiliments rendered her more interesting than ever, nor was it possible to see or hear her unmoved. Paul became more and more melancholy; at length Margaret, distressed by the situation of her son, took him aside, and said to him: "Why, my dear son, will you cherish vain hopes, which will only render your disappointment more bitter! It is time that I should make known to you the secret of your life and of mine. Mademoiselle de la Tour belongs, by her mother, to a rich and noble family, while you are but the son of a poor peasant girl; and, what is worse, you are a natural child."

Paul, who had never before heard this last expression, inquired with eagerness its meaning. His mother replied: "You had no legitimate father. When I was a girl, seduced by love, I was guilty of a weakness of which you are the offspring. My fault deprived you of the protection of a father's family, and my flight from home, of that of a mother's family. Unfortunate child! you have no relation in the world but me!" And she shed a flood of tears. Paul, pressing her in his arms exclaimed: "Oh, my dear mother, since I have no relation

in the world but you, I will love you still more! But what a secret you have disclosed to me! I now see the reason why Mademoiselle de la Tour has estranged herself from me for two months past, and why she has determined to go. Ah! I perceive too well that she despises me!"

The hour of supper being arrived, we placed ourselves at table; but the different sensations with which we were all agitated left us little inclination to eat, and the meal passed in silence. Virginia first went out, and seated herself on the very spot where we now are placed. Paul hastened after her, and seated himself by her side. It was one of those delicious nights which are so common between the tropics, and the beauty of which no pencil can trace. The moon appeared in the midst of the firmament, curtained in clouds, which her beams gradually dispelled. Her light insensibly spread itself over the mountains of the island, and their peaks glistened with a silvered green. The winds were perfectly still. We heard along the woods, at the bottom of the valleys, and on the summits of the rocks, the weak cry and the soft murmurs of the birds, exulting in the brightness of the night, and the serenity of the atmosphere. The hum of insects was heard in the grass. The stars sparkled in the heavens, and their trembling and lucid orbs were reflected upon the bosom of the ocean. Virginia's eyes wandered over its vast and gloomy horizon, distinguishable from the bay of the island by the red fires in the fishing

boats. She perceived at the entrance of the harbor a light and a shadow. These were the watchlight and the body of the vessel in which she was to embark for Europe, and which, ready to set sail, lay at anchor, waiting for the wind. Affected at this sight, she turned away her head, in order to hide her tears from Paul.

Madame de la Tour, Margaret, and myself were seated at a little distance beneath the plantain trees; and amidst the stillness of the night we distinctly heard their conversation, which I have not forgotten.

Paul said to her: "You are going, they tell me, in three days. You do not fear then to encounter the danger of the sea, at which you are so much terrified!" "I must fulfill my duty," answered Virginia, "by obeying my parent." "You leave us," resumed Paul, "for a distant relation whom you have never seen." "Alas!" cried Virginia, "I would have remained my whole life here, but my mother would not have it so. My confessor told me that it was the will of God I should go, and that life was a trial!"

"What," exclaimed Paul, "you have found so many reasons then for going, and not one for remaining here! Ah, there is one reason for your departure which you have not mentioned. Riches have great attractions. You will soon find in the new world, to which you are going, another to whom you will give the name of brother, which you will bestow on me no more. You will choose that brother from amongst persons who are worthy of you

by their birth, and by a fortune which I have not to offer. But where will you go in order to be happier? On what shore will you land which will be dearer to you than the spot which gave you birth? Where will you find a society more interesting to you than this by which you are so beloved? How will you bear to live without your mother's caresses, to which you are so accustomed? What will become of her, already advanced in years, when she will no longer see you at her side at table, in the house, in the walks where she used to lean upon you? What will become of my mother, who loves you with the same affection? What shall I say to comfort them when I see them weeping for your absence? Cruel! I speak not to you of myself; but what will become of me when in the morning I shall no more see you; when the evening will come, and will not reunite us? When I shall gaze on the two palm trees, planted at our birth, and so long the witnesses of our mutual friendship? Ah, since a new destiny attracts you, since you seek in a country, distant from your own, other possessions than those which were the fruits of my labor, let me accompany you in the vessel in which you are going to embark. I will animate your courage in the midst of those tempests at which you are so terrified even on shore. I will lay your head on my bosom. I will warm your heart upon my own; and in France, where you go in search of fortune and grandeur, I will attend you as your slave. Happy only in your happiness, you will find me in those palaces

where I shall see you cherished and adored, at least sufficiently noble to make for you the greatest of all sacrifices, by dying at your feet."

The violence of his emotion stifled his voice, and we then heard that of Virginia, which, broken by sobs, uttered these words: "It is for you I go; for you, whom I see every day bent beneath the labor of sustaining two infirm families. If I have accepted this opportunity of becoming rich, it is only to return you a thousand fold the good which you have done us. Is there any fortune worthy of your friendship? Why do you talk to me of your birth? Ah, if it was again possible to give me a brother, should I make choice of any other than you? Oh, Paul! Paul! you are far dearer to me than a brother! How much has it cost me to avoid you! Help me to tear myself from what I value more than existence, till Heaven can bless our union. But I will stay or go; I will live or die; dispose of me as you will. Unhappy that I am! I could resist your caresses, but I am unable to support your affliction."

At these words Paul seized her in his arms, and, holding her pressed fast to his bosom, cried, in a piercing tone: "I will go with her; nothing shall divide us." We ran towards him; and Madame de la Tour said to him: "My son, if you go, what will become of us?"

He, trembling, repeated the words: "My son! — My son! — You, my mother," cried he; "you, who would separate the brother from the sister! We have both been nourished at your bosom; we have both been reared upon

your knees; we have learnt of you to love each other; we have said so a thousand times; and now you would separate her from me! You send her to Europe, that barbarous country which refused you an asylum, and to relations by whom you were abandoned. You will tell me that I have no right over her, and that she is not my sister. She is everything to me,—riches, birth, family, my sole good! I know no other. We have had but one roof, one cradle, and we will have but one grave. If she goes, I will follow her. The governor will prevent me! Will he prevent me from flinging myself into the sea? Will he prevent me from following her by swimming? The sea cannot be more fatal to me than the land. Since I cannot live with her, at least I will die before her eyes! far from you, inhuman mother! woman without compassion! May the ocean, to which you trust her, restore her to you no more! May the waves, rolling back our corpses amidst the stones of the beach, give you, in the loss of your two children, an eternal subject of remorse!"

At these words I seized him in my arms, for despair had deprived him of reason. His eyes flashed fire, big drops of sweat hung upon his face, his knees trembled, and I felt his heart beat violently against his burning bosom.

Virginia, affrighted, said to him: "Oh, my friend, I call to witness the pleasures of our early age, your sorrows and my own, and every thing that can for ever bind two unfortunate beings to each other, that if I remain, I will

live but for you; that if I go, I will one day return to be yours. I call you all to witness, you who have reared my infancy, who dispose of my life, who see my tears. I swear by that Heaven which hears me, by the sea which I am going to pass, by the air I breathe, and which I never sullied by a falsehood."

As the sun softens and dissolves an icy rock upon the summit of the Apennines, so the impetuous passions of the young man were subdued by the voice of her he loved. He bent his head, and a flood of tears fell from his eyes. His mother, mingling her tears with his, held him in her arms, but was unable to speak. Madame de la Tour, half distracted, said to me: "I can bear this no longer. My heart is broken. This unfortunate voyage shall not take place. Do take my son home with you. It is eight days since any one here has slept."

I said to Paul: "My dear friend, your sister will remain. Tomorrow we will speak to the governor; leave your family to take some rest, and come and pass the night with me."

He suffered himself to be led away in silence, and after a night of great agitation, he arose at break of day and returned home.

But why should I continue any longer the recital of this history? There is never but one aspect of human life which we can contemplate with pleasure. Like the globe upon which we revolve, our fleeting course is but a day, and if one part of that day be visited by light, the other is thrown into darkness.

"Father," I answered, "finish, I conjure

you, the history which you have begun in a manner so interesting. If the images of happiness are most pleasing, those of misfortune are more instructive. Tell me what became of the unhappy young man."

The first object which Paul beheld in his way home was Mary, who, mounted upon a rock, was earnestly looking towards the sea. As soon as he perceived her, he called to her from a distance: "Where is Virginia?" Mary turned her head towards her young master, and began to weep. Paul, distracted, and treading back his steps, ran to the harbor. He was there informed that Virginia had embarked at break of day, that the vessel had immediately after set sail and could no longer be discerned. He instantly returned to the plantation, which he crossed without uttering a word.

Although the pile of rocks behind us appears almost perpendicular, those green platforms which separate their summits are so many stages by means of which you may reach, through some difficult paths, that cone of hanging and inaccessible rocks called the Thumb. At the foot of that cone is a stretching slope of ground, covered with lofty trees, and which is so high and steep that it appears like a forest in air, surrounded by tremendous precipices. The clouds, which are attracted around the summit of those rocks, supply innumerable rivulets which rush from so immense a height into that deep valley situated behind the mountain that, from this elevated point, we do not hear the sound of their fall.

On that spot you can discern a considerable part of the island with its precipices crowned with their majestic peaks, and amongst others Peterbath and the Three Peaks, with their valley filled with woods. You also command an extensive view of the ocean, and even perceive the isle of Bourbon forty leagues towards the west. From the summit of that stupendous pile of rocks Paul gazed upon the vessel which had borne away Virginia, and which now, ten leagues out to sea, appeared like a black spot in the midst of the ocean. He remained a great part of the day with his eyes fixed upon this object; when it had disappeared he still fancied he beheld it; and when at length the traces which clung to his imagination were lost amidst the gathering mists of the horizon, he seated himself on that wild point, forever beaten by the winds, which never cease to agitate the tops of the cabbage and gum trees, and the hoarse and mourning murmurs of which, similar to the distant sound of organs, inspire a deep melancholy. On that spot I found Paul, with his head reclined on the rock and his eyes fixed upon the ground. I had followed him since the break of day, and after much importunity I prevailed with him to descend from the heights and return to his family. I conducted him to the plantation, where the first impulse of his mind, upon seeing Madame de la Tour, was to reproach her bitterly for having deceived him. Madame de la Tour told us that a favorable wind having arose at three o'clock in the morning, and the

vessel being ready to set sail, the governor, attended by his general officers and the missionary, had come with a palanquin in search of Virginia, and that, notwithstanding her own objections, her tears, and those of Margaret, all the while exclaiming that it was for the general welfare, they had carried away Virginia almost dying. "At least," cried Paul, "if I had bid her farewell, I should now be more calm. I would have said to her: Virginia, if, during the time we have lived together, one word may have escaped me which has offended you, before you leave me forever, tell me that you forgive me. I would have said to her: Since I am destined to see you no more, farewell, my dear Virginia, farewell! Live, far from me, contented and happy!"

When he saw that his mother and Madame de la Tour were weeping, "You must now," said he, "seek some other than me to wipe away your tears;" and then, rushing out of the house, he wandered up and down the plantation. He flew eagerly to those spots which had been most dear to Virginia. He said to the goats and their kids which followed him, bleating: "What do you ask of me? You will see her no more who used to feed you with her own hand." He went to the bower called the Repose of Virginia, and, as the birds flew around him, exclaimed: "Poor little birds! you will fly no more to meet her who cherished you!" and observing Fidele running backwards and forwards in search of her, he heaved a deep sigh, and cried: "Ah, you will

never find her again." At length he went and seated himself upon the rock where he had conversed with her the preceding evening; and at the view of the ocean, upon which he had seen the vessel disappear, which bore her away, he wept bitterly.

We continually watched his steps, apprehending some fatal consequence from the violent agitation of his mind. His mother and Madame de la Tour conjured him in the most tender manner not to increase their affliction by his despair. At length Madame de la Tour soothed his mind by lavishing upon him such epithets as were best calculated to revive his hopes. She called him her son, her dear son, whom she destined for her daughter. She prevailed with him to return to the house and receive a little nourishment. He seated himself with us at table, next to the place which used to be occupied by the companion of his childhood, and, as if she had still been present, he spoke to her, and offered whatever he knew was most agreeable to her taste; and then, starting from this dream of fancy, he began to weep. For some days he employed himself in gathering together every thing which had belonged to Virginia; the last nosegay she had worn, the cocoa shell in which she used to drink; and after kissing a thousand times those relics of his friend, to him the most precious treasures which the world contained, he hid them in his bosom. The spreading perfumes of the amber are not so sweet as the objects which have belonged to those we love.

At length, perceiving that his anguish increased that of his mother and Madame de la Tour, and that the wants of the family required continual labor, he began, with the assistance of Domingo, to repair the garden.

Soon after, this young man, till now indifferent as a Creole with respect to what was passing in the world, desired I would teach him to read and write, that he might carry on a correspondence with Virginia. He then wished to be instructed in geography, in order that he might form a just idea of the country where she had disembarked; and in history, that he might know the manners of the society in which she was placed. The powerful sentiment of love, which directed his present studies, had already taught him the arts of agriculture, and the manner of laying out the most irregular grounds with advantage and beauty. It must be admitted that to the fond dreams of this restless and ardent passion, mankind are indebted for a great number of arts and sciences, while its disappointments have given birth to philosophy, which teaches us to bear the evils of life with resignation. Thus, nature having made love the general link which binds all beings, has rendered it the first spring of society, the first incitement to knowledge as well as pleasure.

Paul found little satisfaction in the study of geography, which, instead of describing the natural history of each country, only gave a view of its political boundaries. History, and especially modern history, interested him little

more. He there saw only general and periodical evils of which he did not discern the cause; wars for which there was no reason and no object; nations without principle, and princes without humanity. He preferred the reading of romances, which, being filled with the particular feelings and interests of men, represented situations similar to his own. No book gave him so much pleasure as Telemachus, from the pictures which it draws of pastoral life, and of those passions which are natural to the human heart. He read aloud to his mother and Madame de la Tour those parts which affected him most sensibly, when, sometimes, touched by the most tender remembrances, his emotion choked his utterance, and his eyes were bathed in tears. He fancied he had found in Virginia the wisdom of Antiope, with the misfortunes and the tenderness of Eucharis. With very different sensations he perused our fashionable novels, filled with licentious maxims and manners. And when he was informed that those romances drew a just picture of European society, he trembled, not without reason, lest Virginia should be corrupted, and should forget him.

More than a year and a half had indeed passed away before Madame de la Tour received any tidings of her daughter. During that period she had only accidentally heard that Virginia had arrived safely in France. At length a vessel, which stopped, in its way to the Indies, conveyed to Madame de la Tour a packet and a letter written with her own hand.

Although this amiable young woman had written in a guarded manner, in order to avoid wounding the feelings of a mother, it was easy to discern that she was unhappy. Her letter paints so naturally her situation and her character that I have retained it almost word for word.

"My dear and beloved Mother:

"I have already sent you several letters, written with my own hand, but having received no answer, I fear they have not reached you. I have better hopes for this, from the means I have now taken of sending you tidings of myself. and of hearing from you. I have shed many tears since our separation; I, who never used to weep, but for the misfortunes of others! My aunt was much astonished, when, having, upon my arrival, inquired what accomplishments I possessed, I told her that I could neither read nor write. She asked me what then I had learned since I came into the world; and when I answered that I had been taught to take care of the household affairs, and obey your will, she told me that I had received the education of a servant. The next day she placed me as a boarder in a great abbey near Paris, where I have masters of all kinds, who teach me, among other things, history, geography, grammar, mathematics, and riding. But I have so little capacity for all those sciences, that I make but small progress with my masters.

"My aunt's kindness, however, does not

abate towards me. She gives me new dresses for each season; and she has placed two waiting-women with me, who are both dressed like fine ladies. She has made me take the title of countess, but has obliged me to renounce the name of La Tour, which is as dear to me as it is to you, from all you have told me of the sufferings my father endured in order to marry you. She has replaced your name by that of your family, which is also dear to me, because it was your name when a girl. Seeing myself in so splendid a situation, I implored her to let me send you some assistance. But how shall I repeat her answer? Yet you have desired me always to tell you the truth. She told me then that a little would be of no use to you, and that a great deal would only encumber you in the simple life you led.

"I endeavored, upon my arrival, to send you tidings of myself by another hand; but, finding no person here in whom I could place confidence, I applied night and day to reading and writing; and Heaven, who saw my motive for learning, no doubt assisted my endeavors, for I acquired both in a short time. I entrusted my first letters to some of the ladies here, who, I have reason to think, carried them to my aunt. This time I have had recourse to a boarder, who is my friend. I send you her direction, by means of which I shall receive your answer. My aunt has forbid my holding any correspondence whatever, which might, she says, become an obstacle to the great views she has for my advantage. No person is allowed to see me at

the grate but herself and an old nobleman, one of her friends, who, she says, is much pleased with me. I am sure I am not at all so with him; nor should I, even if it were possible for me to be pleased with any one at present.

"I live in the midst of affluence, and have not a livre at my disposal. They say I might make an improper use of money. Even my clothes belong to my waiting-women, who quarrel about them before I have left them off. In the bosom of riches, I am poorer than when I lived with you; for I have nothing to give. When I found that the great accomplishments they taught me would not procure me the power of doing the smallest good, I had recourse to my needle, of which happily you had learnt me the use. I send several pairs of stockings of my own making for you and my mamma Margaret, a cap for Domingo, and one of my red handkerchiefs for Mary. I also send with this packet some kernels and seeds of various kinds of fruits, which I gathered in the fields. There are much more beautiful flowers in the meadows of this country than in ours, but nobody cares for them. I am sure that you and my mamma Margaret will be better pleased with this bag of seeds than you were with the bag of piasters, which was the cause of our separation and of my tears. It will give me great delight if you should one day see apple trees growing at the side of the plantain, and elms blending their foliage with our cocoa trees. You will fancy yourself in Normandy, which you love so much.

"You desired me to relate to you my joys and my griefs. I have no joys far from you. As for my griefs, I endeavor to soothe them by reflecting that I am in the situation in which you placed me by the will of God. But my greatest affliction is that no one here speaks to me of you, and that I must speak of you to no one. My waiting-women, or rather those of my aunt, for they belong more to her than to me, told me the other day, when I wished to turn the conversation upon the objects most dear to me, 'Remember, madam, that you are a French woman, and must forget that country of savages.' Ah! sooner will I forget myself, than forget the spot on which I was born, and which you inhabit! It is this country which is to me a land of savages; for I live alone, having no one to whom I can impart those feelings of tenderness for you which I shall bear with me to the grave.

"I am,

"My dearest and beloved mother,

"Your affectionate and dutiful daughter,

"VIRGINIA DE LA TOUR.

"I recommend to your goodness Mary and Domingo, who took so much care of my infancy. Caress Fidele for me, who found me in the wood."

Paul was astonished that Virginia had not said one word of him, she who had not forgotten even the house dog. But Paul was not aware that, however long may be a woman's

letter, she always puts the sentiments most dear to her at the end.

In a postscript, Virginia recommended particularly to Paul's care two kinds of seed, those of the violet and scabious. She gave him some instructions upon the nature of those plants, and the spots most proper for their cultivation. "The first," said she, "produces a little flower of a deep violet, which loves to hide itself beneath the bushes, but it is soon discovered by its delightful odors." She desired those seeds might be sown along the borders of the fountain, at the foot of her cocoa tree. "The scabious," she added, "produces a beautiful flower of a pale blue, and a black ground, spotted with white. You might fancy it was in mourning; and for this reason, it is called the widow's flower. It delights in bleak spots beaten by the winds." She begged this might be sown upon the rock where she had spoken to him for the last time, and that, for her sake, he would henceforth give it the name of the Farewell Rock.

She had put those seeds into a little purse, the tissue of which was extremely simple; but which appeared above all price to Paul, when he perceived a P and a V intwined together, and knew that the beautiful hair which formed the cipher was the hair of Virginia.

The whole family listened with tears to the letter of that amiable and virtuous young woman. Her mother answered it in the name of the little society, and desired her to remain or return as she thought proper, assuring her

that happiness had fled from their dwelling since her departure, and that as for herself she was inconsolable.

Paul also sent her a long letter, in which he assured her that he would arrange the garden in a manner agreeable to her taste, and blend the plants of Europe with those of Africa. He sent her some fruit culled from the cocoa trees of the fountain which were now arrived at maturity, telling her that he would not add any more of the other seeds of the island, that the desire of seeing those productions again might hasten her return. He conjured her to comply without delay with the ardent wishes of her family, and, above all, with his own, since he was unable to endure the pain of their separation.

With a careful hand Paul sowed the European seeds, particularly the violet and the scabious, the flowers of which seem to bear some analogy to the character and situation of Virginia, by whom they had been recommended, but whether they were injured by the voyage, or whether the soil of this part of Africa is unfavorable to their growth, a very small number of them blew, and none came to perfection.

Meanwhile that envy which pursues human happiness, spread reports over the island which gave great uneasiness to Paul. The persons who had brought Virginia's letter asserted that she was upon the point of being married, and named the nobleman of the court with whom she was going to be united. Some even declared that she was already married, of which

they were witnesses. Paul at first despised this report, brought by one of those trading ships which often spread erroneous intelligence in their passage; but some ill natured persons, by their insulting pity, led him to give some degree of credit to this cruel intelligence. Besides, he had seen in the novels which he had lately read that perfidy was treated as a subject of pleasantry; and knowing that those books were faithful representations of European manners, he feared that the heart of Virginia was corrupted, and had forgotten its former engagements. Thus his requirements only served to render him miserable; and what increased his apprehensions was that several ships arrived from Europe during the space of six months and not one brought any tidings of Virginia.

This unfortunate young man, with a heart torn by a most cruel agitation, came often to visit me, that I might confirm or banish his inquietude by my experience of the world.

I live, as I have already told you, a league and a half from hence, upon the banks of a little river which glides along the Sloping Mountain; there I lead a solitary life, without wife, children, or slaves.

After having enjoyed and lost the rare felicity of living with a congenial mind, the state of life which appears the least wretched is that of solitude. It is remarkable that all those nations which have been rendered unhappy by their political opinions, their manners, or their forms of government, have produced numerous

classes of citizens altogether devoted to solitude and celibacy. Such were the Egyptians in their decline, the Greeks of the lower empire, and such in our days are the Indians, the Chinese, the modern Greeks, the Italians, and most part of the eastern and southern nations of Europe.

Thus I pass my days far from mankind, whom I wished to serve, and by whom I have been persecuted. After having travelled over many countries of Europe, and some parts of America and Africa, I at length pitched my tent in this thinly peopled island, allured by its mild temperature and its solitude. A cottage which I built in the woods, at the foot of a tree, a little field which I cultivated with my own hands, a river which glides before my door, suffice for my wants and for my pleasures. I blend with those enjoyments that of some chosen books, which teach me to become better. They make that world which I have abandoned still contribute to my satisfaction. They place before me pictures of those passions which render its inhabitants so miserable; and the comparison which I make between their destiny and my own leads me to feel a sort of negative happiness. Like a man whom shipwreck has thrown upon a rock, I contemplate from my solitude the storms which roll over the rest of the world; and my repose seems more profound from the distant sounds of the tempest.

I suffer myself to be led calmly down the stream of time to the ocean of futurity which

has no boundaries; while in the contemplation of the present harmony of nature, I raise my soul towards its supreme Author, and hope for a more happy destiny in another state of existence.

Although you do not descry my hermitage, which is situated in the midst of a forest, among that immense variety of objects which this elevated spot presents, the grounds are disposed with particular beauty, at least to one who, like me, loves rather the seclusion of a home scene than great and extensive prospects. The river which glides before my door passes in a straight line across the woods, and appears like a long canal shaded by trees of all kinds. There are black date plum trees, what we here call the narrow-leaved dodonea, olive wood, gum trees, and the cinnamon tree; while in some parts the cabbage trees raise their naked columns more than a hundred feet high, crowned at their summits with clustering leaves, and towering above the wood like one forest piled upon another. Lianas, of various foliage, intertwining among the woods form arcades of flowers and verdant canopies; those trees for the most part shed aromatic odors of a nature so powerful that the garments of a traveller who has passed through the forest retain for several hours the delicious fragrance. In the season when those trees produce their lavish blossoms they appear as if covered with snow. One of the principal ornaments of our woods is the calbassia, a tree not only distinguished for its beautiful tint of verdure, bur

for other properties which Madame de la Tour has described in the following sonnet, written at one of her first visits to my hermitage: —

SONNET TO THE CALBASSIA TREE.

Sublime Calbassia, luxuriant tree!
How soft the gloom thy bright-hued foliage throws,
While from thy pulp a healing balsam flows,
Whose power the suffering wretch from pain can free,
My pensive footsteps ever turn to thee!
Since oft, while musing on my lasting woes,
Beneath thy flowery white bells I repose,
Symbol of friendship dost thou seem to me;
For thus has friendship cast her soothing shade
O'er my unsheltered bosom's keen distress;
Thus sought to heal the wounds which love has made,
And temper bleeding sorrow's sharp excess!
Ah, not in vain she lends her balmy aid,—
The agonies she cannot cure are less.

Towards the end of summer various kinds of foreign birds hasten, impelled by an inexplicable instinct, from unknown regions, and across immense oceans, to gather the profuse grains of this island; and the brilliancy of their expanded plumage forms a contrast to the trees imbrowned by the sun. Such among others are various kinds of paroquets, the blue pigeon, called here the pigeon of Holland, and the wandering and majestic white bird of the tropic, which Madame de la Tour thus apostrophized:

SONNET TO THE WHITE BIRD OF THE TROPIC.

Bird of the tropic! thou who lov'st to stray
Where thy long pinions sweep the sultry line,
Or mark'st the bounds which torrid beams confine
By thy averted course, that shuns the ray
Oblique, enamored of sublimer day:

Oft on yon cliff thy folded plumes recline,
And drop those snowy feathers Indians twine
To crown the warrior's brow with honors gay.
O'er trackless oceans what impels thy wing?
Does no soft instinct in thy soul prevail?
No sweet affection to thy bosom cling,
And bid thee oft thy absent nest bewail?
Yet thou again to that dear spot canst spring;
But I my long-lost home no more shall hail!

The domestic inhabitants of our forests, monkeys, sport upon the dark branches of the trees, from which they are distinguished by their gray and greenish skin, and their black visages. Some hang suspended by the tail, and balance themselves in air; others leap from branch to branch, bearing their young in their arms. The murderous gun has never affrighted those peaceful children of nature. You sometimes hear the warblings of unknown birds from the southern countries, repeated at a distance by the echoes of the forest. The river, which runs in foaming cataracts over a bed of rocks, reflects here and there, upon its limped waters, venerable masses of woody shade, together with the sport of its happy inhabitants. About a thousand paces from thence the river precipitates itself over several piles of rocks, and forms, in its fall, a sheet of water smooth as crystal, but which breaks at the bottom into frothy surges. Innumerable confused sounds issue from those tumultuous waters, which, scattered by the winds of the forest, sometimes sink, sometimes swell, and send forth a hollow tone like the deep bells of a cathedral. The air, for ever renewed by

the circulation of the waters, fans the banks of that river with freshness, and leaves a degree of verdure, notwithstanding the summer heats, rarely found in this island, even upon the summits of the mountains.

At some distance is a rock, placed far enough from the cascade to prevent the ear from being deafened by the noise of its waters, and sufficiently near for the enjoyment of their view, their coolness, and their murmurs. Thither, amidst the heats of summer, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Virginia, Paul, and myself sometimes repaired, and dined beneath the shadow of the rock. Virginia, who always directed her most ordinary actions to the good of others, never eat of any fruit without planting the seed or kernel in the ground. "From this," said she, "trees will come which will give their fruit to some traveller, or at least to some bird." One day having eaten of the pappaw fruit, at the foot of that rock she planted the seeds. Soon after several pappaws sprung up, amongst which was one that yielded fruit. This tree had risen but a little from the ground at the time of Virginia's departure; but its growth being rapid, in the space of two years it had gained twenty feet of height, and the upper part of its stem was encircled with several layers of ripe fruit. Paul, having wandered to that spot, was delighted to see that this lofty tree had arisen from the small seed planted by his beloved friend; but that emotion instantly gave place to a deep melancholy at this evidence of her long absence. The objects

which we see habitually do not remind us of the rapidity of life; they decline insensibly with ourselves; but those which we behold again, after having for some years lost sight of them, impress us powerfully with the idea of that swiftness with which the tide of our days flows on. Paul was no less overwhelmed and affected at the sight of this great pappaw tree, loaded with fruit, than is the traveller when, after a long absence from his own country, he finds not his contemporaries, but their children, whom he left at the breast, and whom he sees are become fathers of families. Paul sometimes thought of hewing down the tree, which recalled too sensibly the distracted image of that length of time which had elapsed since the departure of Virginia. Sometimes contemplating it as a monument of her benevolence, he kissed its trunk, and apostrophized it in terms of the most passionate regret; and, indeed, I have myself gazed upon it with more emotion and more veneration than upon the triumphal arches of Rome.

At the foot of this pappaw I was always sure to meet with Paul when he came into our neighborhood. One day, when I found him absorbed in melancholy, we had a conversation, which I will relate to you, if I do not weary you by my long digressions, — perhaps pardonable to my age and my last friendship.

Paul said to me: "I am very unhappy. Mademoiselle de la Tour has now been gone two years and two months; and we have heard no tidings of her for eight months and two

weeks. She is rich, and I am poor. She has forgotten me. I have a great mind to follow her. I will go to France; I will serve the king; make a fortune; and then Mademoiselle de la Tour's aunt will bestow her niece upon me when I shall have become a great lord."

"But my dear friend," I answered, "have you not told me that you are not of noble birth?"

"My mother has told me so," said Paul. "As for myself, I know not what noble birth means."

"Obscure birth," I replied, "in France shuts out all access to great employments; nor can you even be received among any distinguished body of men."

"How unfortunate I am!" resumed Paul: "everything repulses me. I am condemned to waste my wretched life in labor, far from Virginia." And he heaved a deep sigh.

"Since her relation," he added, "will only give her in marriage to some one with a great name, by the aid of study we become wise and celebrated. I will fly then to study; I will acquire sciences; I will serve my country usefully by my attainments; I shall be independent; I shall become renowned; and my glory shall belong only to myself."

"My son, talents are still more rare than birth or riches, and are undoubtedly an inestimable good, of which nothing can deprive us, and which everywhere conciliate public esteem. But they cost dear; they are generally allied to exquisite sensibility, which renders their pos-

sessor miserable. But you tell me that you would serve mankind. He who, from the soil which he cultivates, draws forth one additional sheaf of corn, serves mankind more than he who presents them with a book."

"Oh! she then," exclaimed Paul, "who planted this pappaw tree, made a present to the inhabitants of the forest more dear and more useful than if she had given them a library." And seizing the tree in his arms, he kissed it with transport.

"Ah, I desire glory only," he resumed, "to confer it upon Virginia, and render her dear to the whole universe. But you, who know so much, tell me if we shall ever be married. I wish I was at least learned enough to look into futurity. Virginia must come back. What need has she of a rich relation? she was so happy in those huts, so beautiful, and so well dressed, with a red handkerchief or flowers around her head! Return, Virginia! Leave your palaces, your splendor! Return to these rocks, to the shade of our woods and our cocoa trees! Alas! you are, perhaps unhappy!" And he began to weep. "My father, conceal nothing from me. If you cannot tell me whether I shall marry Virginia or no, tell me, at least, if she still loves me amidst those great lords who speak to the king, and go to see her."

"Oh, my dear friend," I answered, "I am sure that she loves you, for several reasons; but, above all, because she is virtuous." At those words he threw himself upon my neck in a transport of joy.

"But what," said he, "do you understand by virtue?"

"My son, to you, who support your family by your labor, it need not be defined. Virtue is an effort which we make for the good of others, and with the intention of pleasing God."

"Oh, how virtuous then," cried he, "is Virginia! Virtue made her seek for riches that she might practice benevolence. Virtue led her to forsake this island, and virtue will bring her back." The idea of her near return fired his imagination, and his inquietudes suddenly vanished. Virginia, he was persuaded, had not written, because she would soon arrive. It took so little time to come from Europe with a fair wind. Then he enumerated the vessels which had made a passage of four thousand five hundred leagues in less than three months; and perhaps the vessel in which Virginia had embarked might not be longer than two. Ship builders were now so ingenious, and sailors so expert. He then told me of the arrangements he would make for her reception, of the new habitation he would build for her, of the pleasures and surprises which each day should bring along with it when she was his wife. His wife! that hope was ecstasy. "At least, my dear father," said he, "you shall then do nothing more than you please. Virginia being rich, we shall have a number of negroes, who will labor for you. You shall always live with us, and have no other care than to amuse and rejoice yourself;" and, his heart throbbing

with delight, he flew to communicate those exquisite sensations to his family.

In a short time, however, the most cruel apprehensions succeeded those enchanting hopes. Violent passions ever throw the soul into opposite extremes. Paul returned to my dwelling absorbed in melancholy, and said to me: "I hear nothing from Virginia. Had she left Europe she would have informed me of her departure. Ah, the reports which I have heard concerning her are but too well founded. Her aunt has married her to some great lord. She, like others, has been undone by the love of riches. In those books which paint women so well, virtue is but a subject of romance. Had Virginia been virtuous, she would not have forsaken her mother and me, and, while I pass life in thinking of her, forgotten me. While I am wretched, she is happy. Ah, that thought distracts me: labor becomes painful, and society irksome. Would to Heaven that war were declared in India! I would go there and die."

"My son," I answered, "that courage which prompts us to court death is but the courage of a moment, and is often excited by the vain hopes of posthumous fame. There is a species of courage more necessary and more rare, which makes us support, without witness and without applause, the various vexations of life, and that is patience. Leaning not upon the opinions of others, but upon the will of God, patience is the courage of virtue."

"Ah," cried he, "I am then without virtue! Everything overwhelms and distracts me."

"Equal, constant, and invariable virtue," I replied, "belongs not to man. In the midst of so many passions by which we are agitated, our reason is disordered and obscured; but there is an ever-burning lamp at which we can rekindle its flame, and that is literature.

"Literature, my dear son, is the gift of Heaven; a ray of that wisdom which governs the universe; and which man, inspired by celestial intelligence, has drawn down to earth. Like the sun, it enlightens, it rejoices, it warms with a divine flame, and seems, in some sort, like the element of fire, to bend all nature to our use. By the aid of literature we bring around us all things, all places, men, and times. By its aid we calm the passions, suppress vice, and excite virtue. Literature is the daughter of Heaven, who has descended upon earth to soften and to charm all human evils.

"Have recourse to your books, then, my son. The sages who have written before our days are travellers who have preceded us in the paths of misfortune, who stretch out a friendly hand towards us, and invite us to join their society when everything else abandons us. A good book is a good friend."

"Ah," cried Paul, "I stood in no need of books when Virginia was here, and she had studied as little as I; but when she looked at me and called me her friend, it was impossible for me to be unhappy."

"Undoubtedly," said I, "there is no friend so agreeable as a mistress by whom we are beloved. There is in the gay graces of woman

a charm that dispels the dark phantoms of reflection. Upon her face sits soft attraction and tender confidence. What joy is not heightened in which she shares? What brow is not unbent by her smiles? What anger can resist her tears? Virginia will return with more philosophy than you and will be surprised not to find the garden finished, — she who thought of its embellishments amidst the persecutions of her aunt, and far from her mother and from you."

The idea of Virginia's speedy return reanimated her lover's courage, and he resumed his pastoral occupations, happy amidst his toils, in the reflection that they would find a termination so dear to the wishes of his heart.

The 24th of December, 1744, at break of day, Paul, when he arose, perceived a white flag hoisted upon the Mountain of Discovery, which was the signal of a vessel descried at sea. He flew to the town in order to learn if this vessel brought any tidings of Virginia, and waited till the return of the pilot, who had gone as usual to visit the ship. The pilot brought the governor information that the vessel was the Saint Geran, of seven hundred tons, commanded by a captain of the name of Aubin; that the ship was now four leagues out at sea, and would anchor at Port Louis the following afternoon, if the wind was favorable; at present there was a calm. The pilot then remitted to the governor a number of letters from France, amongst which was one addressed to Madame de la Tour, in the handwriting of

Virginia. Paul seized upon the letter, kissed it with transport, placed it in his bosom, and flew to the plantation. No sooner did he perceive from a distance the family, who were waiting his return upon the Farewell Rock, than he waved the letter in the air without having the power to speak; and instantly the whole family crowded around Madame de la Tour to hear it read. Virginia informed her mother that she had suffered much ill treatment from her aunt, who after having in vain urged her to marry against her inclination, had disinherited her, and at length sent her back at such a season of the year that she must probably reach the Mauritius at the very period of the hurricanes. In vain, she added, she had endeavored to soften her aunt, by representing what she owed to her mother, and to the habits of her early years; she had been treated as a romantic girl whose head was turned by novels. At present she said she could think of nothing but the transport of again seeing and embracing her beloved family and that she would have satisfied this dearest wish of her heart that very day if the captain would have permitted her to embark in the pilot's boat; but that he had opposed her going on account of the distance from the shore, and of a swell in the ocean, notwithstanding it was a calm.

Scarcely was the letter finished, when the whole family, transported with joy, repeated "Virginia is arrived!" and mistresses and servants embraced each other. Madame de la Tour said to Paul: "My son, go and inform

our neighbor of Virginia's arrival." Domingo immediately lighted a torch, and he and Paul bent their way towards my plantation.

It was about ten at night, and I was going to extinguish my lamp when I perceived through the palisades of my hut a light in the woods. I arose, and had just dressed myself, when Paul, half wild, and panting for breath, sprang on my neck, crying: "Come along, come along. Virginia is arrived! Let us go to the Port; the vessel will anchor at break of day."

We instantly set off. As we were traversing the woods of the Sloping Mountain, and were already on the road which leads from the Shaddock Grove to the Port, I heard some one walking behind us. When the person, who was a negro, and who advanced with hasty steps, had reached us, I inquired from whence he came and whither he was going with such expedition. He answered: "I come from that part of the island called Golden Dust, and am sent to the Port to inform the Governor that a ship from France has anchored upon the island of Amber, and fires guns of distress, for the sea is very stormy." Having said this the man left us and pursued his journey.

"Let us go," said I to Paul, "towards that part of the island and meet Virginia. It is only three leagues from hence." Accordingly we bent our course thither. The heat was suffocating. The moon had risen, and it was encompassed by three large black circles. A dismal darkness shrouded the sky; but the frequent flakes of lightning discovered long

chains of thick clouds, gloomy, low hung, and heaped together over the middle of the island, after having rolled with great rapidity from the ocean, although we felt not a breath of wind upon the land. As we walked along, we thought we heard peals of thunder; but, after listening more attentively, we found they were the sound of distant cannon repeated by the echoes. Those sounds, joined to the tempestu ous aspect of the heavens, made me shudder. I had little doubt that they were signals of distress from a ship in danger. In half an hour the firing ceased, and I felt the silence more appalling than the dismal sounds which had preceded.

We hastened on without uttering a word, or daring to communicate our apprehensions. At midnight we arrived on the sea shore at that part of that island. The billows broke against the beach with a horrible noise, covering the rocks and the strand with their foam of a dazzling whiteness, and blended with sparks of fire. By their phosphoric gleams we distin guished, notwithstanding the darkness, the canoes of the fishermen, which they had drawn far upon the sand.

Near the shore, at the entrance of a wood, we saw a fire, round which several of the inhabitants were assembled. Thither we repaired, in order to repose ourselves till morning. One of the circle related, that in the afternoon he had seen a vessel driven towards the island by the currents; that the night had hid it from his view; and that two hours after sunset he had

heard the firing of guns in distress; but that the sea was so tempestuous no boat could venture out; that a short time after, he thought he perceived the glimmering of the watch-lights on board the vessel, which he feared, by its having approached so near the coast, had steered between the main land and the little island of Amber, mistaking it for the point of Endeavor, near which the vessels pass in order to gain Port Louis. If this was the case, which, however, he could not affirm, the ship he apprehended was in great danger. Another islander then informed us, that he had frequently crossed the channel which separates the isle of Amber from the coast, and which he had sounded; that the anchorage was good, and that the ship would there be in as great security as if it were in harbor. A third islander declared it was impossible for the ship to enter that channel, which was scarcely navigable for a boat. He asserted that he had seen the vessel at anchor beyond the isle of Amber; so that if the wind arose in the morning, it could either put to sea or gain the harbor. Different opinions were stated upon the subject, which, while those indolent Creoles calmly discussed, Paul and I observed a profound silence. We remained on this spot till break of day, when the weather was too hazy to admit of our distinguishing any object at sea, which was covered with fog. All we could descry was a dark cloud, which they told us was the isle of Amber, at the distance of a quarter of a league from the coast. We could only discern on this gloomy day the

point of the beach were we stood, and the peaks of some mountains in the interior part of the island, rising occasionally from amidst the clouds which hung around them.

At seven in the morning we heard the beat of drums in the woods; and soon after the governor, Monsieur de la Bourdonnais, arrived on horseback, followed by a detachment of soldiers armed with muskets, and a great number of islanders and blacks. He ranged his soldiers upon the beach, and ordered them to make a general discharge, which was no sooner done than we perceived a glimmering light upon the water, which was instantly succeeded by the sound of a gun. We judged that the ship was at no great distance, and ran towards that part where we had seen the light. We now discerned through the fog the hull and tackling of a large vessel; and, notwithstanding the noise of the waves, we were near enough to hear the whistle of the boatswain at the helm, and the shouts of the mariners. As soon as the Saint Geran perceived that we were near enough to give her succor, she continued to fire guns regularly at the interval of three minutes. Monsieur de la Bourdonnais caused great fires to be lighted at certain distances upon the strand, and sent to all the inhabitants of that neighborhood, in search of provisions, planks, cables, and empty barrels. A crowd of people soon arrived, accompanied by their negroes, loaded with provisions and rigging. One of the most aged of the planters approaching the governor, said to him: "We have heard

all night hoarse noises in the mountain, and in the forests; the leaves of the trees are shaken, although there is no wind; the sea birds seek refuge upon the land; it is certain that all those signs announce a hurricane." "Well, my friends," answered the governor, "we are prepared for it; and no doubt the vessel is also."

Everything indeed presaged the near approach of the hurricane. The centre of the clouds in the zenith was of a dismal black, while their skirts were fringed with a copper hue. The air resounded with the cries of the frigate bird, the cur water, and a multitude of other sea birds, who, notwithstanding the obscurity of the atmosphere, hastened from all points of the horizon to seek for shelter in the island.

Towards nine in the morning we heard on the side of the ocean the most terrific noise, as if torrents of water, mingled with thunder, were rolling down the steeps of the mountains. A general cry was heard of "There is the hurricane!" and in one moment a frightful whirlwind scattered the fog which had covered the isle of Amber and its channel. The Saint Geran then presented itself to our view, her gallery crowded with people, her yards and main topmast laid upon the deck, her flag shivered, with four cables at her head, and one by which she was held at the stern. She had anchored between the isle of Amber and the main land, within that chain of breakers which encircles the island, and which bar she had passed over, in a place where no vessel had ever gone before.

She presented head to the waves which rolled from the open sea; and as each billow rushed into the straits, the ship heaved, so that her keel was in air; and at the same moment her stern, plunging into the water, disappeared altogether, as if it were swallowed up by the surges. In this position, driven by the winds and waves towards the shore, it was equally impossible for her to return by the passage through which she had made her way; or, by cutting her cables, to throw herself upon the beach, from which she was separated by sand banks, mingled with breakers. Every billow which broke upon the coast advanced roaring to the bottom of the bay, and threw planks to the distance of fifty feet upon the land; then rushing back, laid bare its sandy bed, from which it rolled immense stones, with a hoarse dismal noise. The sea, swelled by the violence of the wind, rose higher every moment; and the channel between this island and the isle of Amber was but one vast sheet of white foam, with yawning pits of black deep billows. The foam boiling in the gulf was more than six feet high; and the winds which swept its surface, bore it over the steep coast more than half a league upon the land. Those innumerable white flakes, driven horizontally as far as the foot of the mountain, appeared like snow issuing from the ocean, which was now confounded with the sky. Thick clouds, of a horrible form, swept along the zenith with the swiftness of birds, while others appeared motionless as rocks. No spot of azure could be discerned in the firmament:

only a pale yellow gleam displayed the objects of earth, sea, and skies.

From the violent efforts of the ship, what we dreaded happened. The cables at the head of the vessel were torn away; it was then held by one anchor only, and was instantly dashed upon the rocks, at the distance of half a cable's length from the shore. A general cry of horror issued from the spectators. Paul rushed towards the sea, when, seizing him by the arm, I exclaimed: "Would you perish?" "Let me go to save her," cried he, "or die!" Seeing that despair deprived him of reason, Domingo and I, in order to preserve him, fastened a long cord around his waist, and seized hold of each end. Paul then precipitated himself towards the ship, now swimming, and now walking upon the breakers. Sometimes he had the hope of reaching the vessel, which the sea in its irregular movements had left almost dry, so that you could have made its circuit on foot; but suddenly the waves advancing with new fury, shrouded it beneath mountains of water, which then lifted it upright upon its keel. The billows at the same moment threw the unfortunate Paul far upon the beach, his legs bathed in blood, his bosom wounded, and himself half dead. The moment he had recovered his senses, he arose, and returned with new ardor towards the vessel, the parts of which now yawned asunder from the violent strokes of the billows. The crew, then despairing of their safety, threw themselves in crowds into the sea, upon yards, planks, hen-coops, tables, and

barrels. At this moment, we beheld an object fitted to excite eternal sympathy; a young lady in the gallery of the stern of the Saint Geran, stretching out her arms towards him who made so many efforts to join her. It was Virginia. She had discovered her lover by his intrepidity. The sight of this amiable young woman, exposed to such horrible danger, filled us with unutterable despair. As for Virginia, with a firm and dignified mien, she waved her hand as if bidding us an eternal farewell. All the sailors had flung themselves into the sea, except one, who still remained upon the deck, and who was naked, and strong as Hercules. This man approached Virginia with respect, and, kneeling at her feet, attempted to force her to throw off her clothes; but she repulsed him with modesty, and turned away her head. Then was heard redoubled cries from the spectators, "Save her! Save her! Do not leave her!" But at that moment a mountain billow, of enormous magnitude, ingulfed itself between the isle of Amber and the coast, and menaced the shattered vessel, towards which it rolled bellowing, with its black sides and foaming head. At this terrible sight the sailor flung himself into the sea; and Virginia, seeing death inevitable, placed one hand upon her clothes, and the other on her heart, and lifting up her lovely eyes, seemed an angel prepared to take her flight to heaven.

Oh, day of horror! Alas! everything was swallowed up by the relentless billows. The surge threw some of the spectators far upon

the beach, whom an impulse of humanity prompted to advance towards Virginia, and also the sailor who had endeavored to save her life. This man, who had escaped from almost certain death, kneeling on the sand, exclaimed: "Oh, my God! thou hast saved my life, but I would have given it willingly for that poor young woman!"

Domingo and myself drew Paul senseless to the shore, the blood flowing from his mouth and ears. The governor put him into the hands of a surgeon, while we sought along the beach for the corpse of Virginia. But the wind having suddenly changed, which frequently happens during hurricanes, our search was in vain; and we lamented that we could not even pay this unfortunate young woman the last sad sepulchral duties.

We retired from the spot overwhelmed with dismay, and our minds wholly occupied by one cruel loss, although numbers had perished in the wreck. Some of the spectators seemed tempted, from the fatal destiny of this virtuous young woman, to doubt the existence of Providence. Alas! there are in life such terrible, such unmerited evils, that even the hope of the wise is sometimes shaken.

In the mean time, Paul, who began to recover his senses, was taken to a house in the neighborhood till he was able to be removed to his own habitation. Thither I bent my way with Domingo, and undertook the sad task of preparing Virginia's mother and her friend for the melancholy event which had happened. When

we reached the entrance of the valley of the river of Fan-Palms, some negroes informed us that the sea had thrown many pieces of the wreck into the opposite bay. We descended towards it; and one of the first objects which struck my sight upon the beach was the corpse of Virginia. The body was half covered with sand, and in the attitude in which we had seen her perish. Her features were not changed; her eyes were closed, her countenance was still serene; but the pale violets of death were blended on her cheek with the blush of virgin modesty. One of her hands was placed upon her clothes, and the other, which she held on her heart, was fast closed, and so stiffened that it was with difficulty I took from its grasp a small box. How great was my emotion when I saw it contained the picture of Paul, which she had promised him never to part with while she lived. At the sight of this last mark of the fidelity and tenderness of the unfortunate girl I wept bitterly. As for Domingo, he beat his breast and pierced the air with his cries. We carried the body of Virginia to a fisher's hut, and gave it in charge to some poor Malabar women, who carefully washed away the sand.

While they were employed in this melancholy office, we ascended with trembling steps to the plantation. We found Madame de la Tour and Margaret at prayer, while waiting for tidings from the ship. As soon as Madame de la Tour saw me coming, she eagerly cried: "Where is my child, my dear child?" My silence and my tears apprised her of her misfortune. She was

seized with convulsive stiflings, with agonizing pains, and her voice was only heard in groans. Margaret cried: "Where is my son? I do not see my son!" and fainted. We ran to her assistance. In a short time she recovered, and being assured that her son was safe and under the care of the governor, she only thought of succoring her friend, who had long successive faintings. Madame de la Tour passed the night in sufferings so exquisite that I became convinced there was no sorrow like a mother's sorrow. When she recovered her senses, she cast her languid and steadfast looks on Heaven. In vain her friend and myself pressed her hands in ours; in vain we called upon her by the most tender names; she appeared wholly insensible; and her oppressed bosom heaved deep and hollow moans.

In the morning Paul was brought home in a palanquin. He was now restored to reason, but unable to utter a word. His interview with his mother and Madame de la Tour which I had dreaded, produced a better effect than all my cares. A ray of consolation gleamed upon the countenances of those unfortunate mothers. They flew to meet him, clasped him in their arms, and bathed him with tears, which excess of anguish had till now forbidden to flow. Paul mixed his tears with theirs, and nature having thus found relief, a long stupor succeeded the convulsive pangs they had suffered, and gave them a lethargic repose like that of death.

Monsieur de la Bourdonnais sent to apprise me secretly that the corpse of Virginia had

been borne to the town by his order, from whence it was to be transferred to the church of the Shaddock Grove. I hastened to Port Louis, and found a multitude assembled from all parts in order to be present at the funeral solemnity, as if the whole island had lost its fairest ornament. The vessels in the harbor had their yards crossed, their flags hoisted, and fired guns at intervals. The grenadiers led the funeral procession, with their muskets reversed, their drums muffled, and sending forth slow dismal sounds. Eight young ladies of the most considerable families of the island dressed in white, and bearing palms in their hands, supported the pall of their amiable companion, which was strewed with flowers. They were followed by a band of children chanting hymns, and by the governor, his field officers, all the principal inhabitants of the island, and an immense crowd of people.

This funeral solemnity had been ordered by the administration of the country, who were desirous of rendering honors to the virtue of Virginia. But when the procession arrived at the foot of this mountain, at the sight of those cottages, of which she had so long been the ornament and happiness, and which her loss now filled with despair, the funeral pomp was interrupted, the hymns and anthems ceased, and the plain resounded with sighs and lamentations. Companies of young girls ran from the neighboring plantations to touch the coffin of Virginia with their scarfs, chaplets, and crowns of flowers, invoking her as a saint.

Mothers asked of Heaven a child like Virginia, lovers a heart as faithful, the poor as tender a friend, and the slaves as kind a mistress.

When the procession had reached the place of interment, the negresses of Madagascar and the caffrees of Mosambiac placed baskets of fruit around the corpse, and hung pieces of stuff upon the neighboring trees, according to the custom of their country. The Indians of Bengal and of the coast of Malabar brought cages filled with birds, which they set at liberty upon her coffin. Thus did the loss of this amiable object affect the natives of different countries, and thus was the ritual of various religions breathed over the tomb of unfortunate virtue.

She was interred near the church of the Shaddock Grove, upon the western side, at the foot of a copse of bamboos, where, in coming from mass with her mother and Margaret, she loved to repose herself, seated by him whom she called her brother.

On his return from the funeral solemnity Monsieur de la Bourdonnais came hither, followed by part of his numerous train. He offered Madame de la Tour and her friend all the assistance which it was in his power to bestow. After expressing his indignation at the conduct of her unnatural aunt, he advanced to Paul, and said every thing which he thought most likely to soothe and console him. "Heaven is my witness," said he, "that I wished to ensure your happiness and that of your family. My dear friend, you must go to France: I will obtain a commission for you, and during your

absence will take the same care of your mother as if she were my own." He then offered him his hand, but Paul drew away and turned his head, unable to bear his sight.

I remained at the plantation of my unfortunate friends, that I might render to them and Paul those offices of friendship which soften, though they cannot cure, calamity. At the end of three weeks Paul was able to walk, yet his mind seemed to droop in proportion as his frame gathered strength. He was insensible to everything; his look was vacant, and when spoken to he made no reply. Madame de la Tour, who was dying, said to him often: "My son, while I look at you, I think I see Virginia." At the name of Virginia he shuddered, and hastened from her, notwithstanding the entreaties of his mother, who called him back to her friend. He used to wander into the garden and seat himself at the foot of Virginia's cocoa tree, with his eyes fixed upon the fountain. The surgeon to the governor, who had shown the most humane attention to Paul and the whole family, told us that, in order to cure that deep melancholy which had taken possession of his mind we must allow him to do whatever he pleased, without contradiction, as the only means of conquering his inflexible silence.

I resolved to follow this advice. The first use which Paul made of his returning strength was to absent himself from the plantation. Being determined not to lose sight of him, I set out immediately, and desired Domingo to

take some provisions and accompany us. Paul's strength and spirits seemed renewed as he descended the mountain. He took the road of the Shaddock Grove; and when he was near the church, in the Alley of Bamboos, he walked directly to the spot where he saw some new-laid earth, and there kneeling down, and raising up his eyes to heaven, he offered up a long prayer, which appeared to me a symptom of returning reason; since this mark of confidence in the Supreme Being showed that his mind began to resume its natural functions. Domingo and I followed his example, fell upon our knees, and mingled our prayers with his. When he arose, he bent his way, paying little attention to us, towards the northern part of the island. As we knew that he was not only ignorant of the spot where the body of Virginia was laid, but even whether it had been snatched from the waves, I asked him why he had offered up his prayer at the foot of those bamboos. He answered: "We have been there so often!" He continued his course until we reached the borders of the forest, when night came on. I prevailed with him to take some nourishment; and we slept upon the grass, at the foot of a tree. The next day I thought he seemed disposed to trace back his steps; for, after having gazed a considerable time upon the church of the Shaddock Grove, with its avenues of bamboo stretching along the plain, he made a motion as if he would return; but, suddenly plunging into the forest, he directed his course to the north. I judged what was

his design, from which I endeavored to dissuade him in vain. At noon he arrived at that part of the island called the Gold Dust. He rushed to the sea shore, opposite to the spot where the Saint Geran perished. At the sight of the isle of Amber and its channel, then smooth as a mirror, he cried: "Virginia! Oh, my dear Virginia!" and fell senseless. Domingo and myself carried him into the woods, where we recovered him with some difficulty. He made an effort to return to the sea shore; but having conjured him not to renew his own anguish and ours by those cruel remembrances, he took another direction. During eight days he sought every spot where he had once wandered with the companion of his childhood. He traced the path by which she had gone to intercede for the slave of the Black River. He gazed again upon the banks of the Three Peaks, where she had reposed herself when unable to walk further, and upon that part of the woods where they lost their way. All those haunts, which recalled the inquietudes, the sports, the repasts, the benevolence of her he loved, the river of the Sloping Mountain, my house, the neighboring cascade, the pappaw tree she had planted, the mossy downs where she loved to run, the openings of the forest where she used to sing, called forth successively the tears of hopeless passion; and those very echoes which had so often resounded their mutual shouts of joy, now only repeated those accents of despair—"Virginia! Oh, my dear Virginia!"

While he led this savage and wandering life, his eyes became sunken and hollow, his skin assumed a yellow tint, and his health rapidly decayed. Convinced that present sufferings are rendered more acute by the bitter recollection of past pleasures, and that the passions gather strength in solitude, I resolved to tear my unfortunate friend from those scenes which recalled the remembrance of his loss, and to lead him to a more busy part of the island. With this view I conducted him to the inhabited heights of Williams, which he had never visited, and where agriculture and commerce ever occasioned much bustle and variety. A crowd of carpenters were employed in hewing down the trees, while others were sawing planks. Carriages were passing and repassing on the roads. Numerous herds of oxen and troops of horses were feeding on those ample meadows, over which a number of habitations were scattered. On many spots the elevation of the soil was favorable to the culture of European trees; ripe corn waved its yellow sheaves upon the plains; strawberry plants flourished in the openings of the woods, and hedges of rose bushes along the roads. The freshness of the air, by giving a tension to the nerves, was favorable to the Europeans. From those heights, situated near the middle of the island, and surrounded by extensive forests, you could neither discern Port Louis, the church of the Shaddock Grove, nor any other object which could recall to Paul the remembrance of Virginia. Even the mountains, which appear

of various shapes on the side of Port Louis, present nothing to the eye from those plains but a long promontory, stretching itself in a straight and perpendicular line, from whence arise lofty pyramids of rocks, on the summits of which the clouds repose.

To those scenes I conducted Paul, and kept him continually in action, walking with him in rain and sunshine, night and day, and contriving that he should lose himself in the depths of forests, leading him over untilled grounds, and endeavoring, by violent fatigue, to divert his mind from its gloomy meditations, and change the course of his reflections, by his ignorance of the paths where we wandered. But the soul of a lover finds everywhere the traces of the object beloved. The night and the day, the calm of solitude, and the tumult of crowds, time itself, while it casts the shade of oblivion over so many other remembrances, in vain would tear that tender and sacred recollection from the heart, which, like the needle, when touched by the loadstone, however it may have been forced into agitation, it is no sooner left to repose than it turns to the pole by which it is attracted. When I inquired of Paul, while we wandered amidst the plains of Williams, "Where are we now going?" he pointed to the north, and said: "Yonder are our mountains; let us return."

Upon the whole, I found that every means I took to divert his melancholy was fruitless, and that no resource was left but an attempt to combat his passion by the arguments which

reason suggested. I answered him: "Yes, there are the mountains where once dwelt your beloved Virginia; and this is the picture you gave her, and which she held, when dying, to her heart, that heart, which even in her last moments only beat for you." I then gave Paul the little picture which he had given Virginia at the borders of the cocoa tree fountain. At this sight a gloomy joy overspread his looks. He eagerly seized the picture with his feeble hands, and held it to his lips. His oppressed bosom seemed ready to burst with emotion, and his eyes were filled with tears which had no power to flow.

"My son," said I, "listen to him who is your friend, who was the friend of Virginia, and who, in the bloom of your hopes, endeavored to fortify your mind against the unforeseen accidents of life. What do you deplore with such bitterness? Your own misfortunes, or those of Virginia? Your own misfortunes are indeed severe. You have lost the most amiable of women; she who sacrificed her own interests to yours, who preferred you to all that fortune could bestow, and considered you as the only recompense worthy of her virtues. But might not this very object, from whom you expected the purest happiness, have proved to you a source of the most cruel distress? She had returned poor, disinherited; and all you could henceforth have partaken with her was your labors; while rendered more delicate by her education, and more courageous by her misfortunes, you would have beheld her every

day sinking beneath her efforts to share and soften your fatigues. Had she brought you children, this would only have served to increase her inquietudes and your own, from the difficulty of sustaining your aged parents and your infant family. You will tell me, there would have been reserved to you a happiness independent of fortune, that of protecting a beloved object, which attaches itself to us in proportion to its helplessness; that your pains and sufferings would have served to endear you to each other, and that your passion would have gathered strength from your mutual misfortunes. Undoubtedly virtuous love can shed a charm over pleasures which are thus mingled with bitterness. But Virginia is no more; yet those persons still live, whom, next to yourself, she held most dear; her mother, and your own, whom your inconsolable afflictions is bending with sorrow to the grave. Place your happiness, as she did hers, in affording them succor. And why deplore the fate of Virginia? Virginia still exists. There is, be assured, a region in which virtue receives its reward. Virginia now is happy. Ah, if, from the abode of angels, she could tell you, as she did when she bid you farewell: "Oh, Paul, life is but a trial. I was faithful to the laws of nature, love, and virtue. Heaven found I had fulfilled my duties, and has snatched me forever from all the miseries I might have endured myself, and all I might have felt for the miseries of others. I am placed above the reach of all human evils, and you pity me! I am become

pure and unchangeable as a particle of light, and you would recall me to the darkness of human life! Oh, Paul! Oh, my beloved friend! recollect those days of happiness, when in the morning we felt the delightful sensations excited by the unfolding beauties of nature; when we gazed upon the sun gilding the peaks of those rocks, and then spreading his rays over the bosom of the forests. How exquisite were our emotions while we enjoyed the glowing colors of the opening day, the odors of our shrubs, the concerts of our birds! Now, at the source of beauty, from which flows all that is delightful upon earth, my soul intuitively sees, tastes, hears, touches what before she could only be made sensible of through the medium of our weak organs. Ah, what language can describe those shores of eternal bliss which I inhabit forever? All that infinite power and celestial bounty can confer, that harmony which results from friendship with numberless beings, exulting in the same felicity, we enjoy in unmixed perfection. Support then the trial which is allotted you, that you may heighten the happiness of your Virginia by love which will know no termination, by hymenials which will be immortal. There I will calm your regrets, I will wipe away your tears. Oh, my beloved friend! my husband! raise your thoughts towards infinite duration, and bear the evils of a moment."

My own emotion choked my utterance. Paul, looking at me steadfastly, cried: "She is no more! She is no more!" and a long fainting

fit succeeded that melancholy exclamation. When restored to himself, he said: "Since death is a good, and since Virginia is happy, I would die too, and be united to Virginia." Thus the motives of consolation I had offered only served to nourish his despair. I was like a man who attempts to save a friend sinking in the midst of a flood, and refusing to swim. Sorrow had overwhelmed his soul. Alas! the misfortunes of early years prepare man for the struggles of life; but Paul had never known adversity.

I led him back to his own dwelling, where I found his mother and Madame de la Tour in a state of increased languor, but Margaret drooped most. Those lively characters upon which light afflictions make a small impression are least capable of resisting great calamities.

"Oh, my good friend," said Margaret, "methought last night I saw Virginia dressed in white, amidst delicious bowers and gardens. She said to me: 'I enjoy the most perfect happiness;' and then approaching Paul with a smiling air, she bore him away. While I struggled to retain my son, I felt that I myself was quitting the earth, and that I followed him with inexpressible delight. I then wished to bid my friend farewell, when I saw she was hastening after me with Mary and Domingo. But what seems most strange is that Madame de la Tour has this very night had a dream attended with the same circumstances."

"My dear friend," I replied, "nothing, I believe, happens in this world without the per-

mission of God. Dreams sometimes foretell the truth."

Madame de la Tour related to me her dream, which was exactly similar; and as I had never observed in either of those persons any propensity to superstition, I was struck with the singular coincidence of their dreams, which I had little doubt would soon be realized.

What I expected took place. Paul died two months after the death of Virginia, whose name dwelt upon his lips even in his expiring moments. Eight days after the death of her son, Margaret saw her last hour approach with that serenity which virtue only can feel. She bade Madame de la Tour the most tender farewell, "in the hope," she said, "of a sweet and eternal reunion. Death is the most precious good," added she, "and we ought to desire it. If life be a punishment, we should wish for its termination; if it be a trial, we should be thankful that it is short."

The governor took care of Domingo and Mary, who were no longer able to labor, and who survived their mistresses but a short time. As for poor Fidele, he pined to death at the period he lost his master.

I conducted Madame de la Tour to my dwelling, and she bore the calamities with elevated fortitude. She had endeavored to comfort Paul and Margaret till their last moments, as if she herself had no agonies to bear. When they were no more, she used to talk of them as of beloved friends, from whom she was not distant. She survived them but one month. Far

from reproaching her aunt for those afflictions she had caused, her benign spirit prayed to God to pardon her and to appease that remorse which the consequences of her cruelty would probably awaken in her breast.

I heard, by successive vessels which arrived from Europe, that this unnatural relation, haunted by a troubled conscience, accused herself continually of the untimely fate of her lovely niece, and the death of her mother, and became at intervals bereft of her reason. Her relations, whom she hated, took the direction of her fortune, after shutting her up as a lunatic, though she possessed sufficient use of her reason to feel all the pangs of her dreadful situation and died at length in agonies of despair.

The body of Paul was placed by the side of his Virginia, at the foot of the same shrubs; and on that hallowed spot the remains of their tender mothers and their faithful servants are laid. No marble covers the turf, no inscription records their virtues; but their memory is engraven upon our hearts in characters which are indelible; and surely if those pure spirits still take an interest in what passes upon earth, they love to wander beneath the roofs of these dwellings, which are inhabited by industrious virtue, to console the poor who complain of their destiny, to cherish in the hearts of lovers the sacred flame of fidelity, to inspire a taste for the blessings of nature, the love of labor, and the dread of riches.

The voice of the people, which is often silent

with regard to those monuments reared to flatter the pride of kings, has given to some parts of this island names which will immortalize the loss of Virginia. Near the isle of Amber, in the midst of sand banks, is a spot called the Pass of St. Geran, from the name of the vessel which there perished. The extremity of that point of land, which is three leagues distant, and half covered by the waves, and which the Saint Geran could not double on the night preceding the hurricane, is called the Cape of Misfortune; and before us, at the end of the valley is the Bay of the Tomb, where Virginia was found buried in the sand, as if the waves had sought to restore her corpse to her family, that they might render it the last sad duties on those shores of which her innocence had been the ornament.

Ye faithful lovers, who were so tenderly united! unfortunate mothers! beloved family! those woods which sheltered you with their foliage, those fountains which flowed for you, those hillocks upon which you reposed, still deplore your loss! No one has since presumed to cultivate that desolated ground, or repair those fallen huts. Your goats are become wild, your orchards are destroyed, your birds are fled, and nothing is heard but the cry of the sparrow-hawk who skims around the valley of rocks. As for myself, since I behold you no more, I am like a father bereft of his children, like a traveller who wanders over the earth desolate and alone.

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